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Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4790th meeting

Friday, 18 July 2003, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Arias	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bangladesh, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda and South Africa, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Mr. Spatafora (Italy) took seats at the Council table; Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Jenie (Indonesia), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. Baja (Philippines), Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda) and Mr. Maitland (South Africa) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Ngongi to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 14 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request that Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign Policy and Security Policy of the European Union, be allowed to participate, on behalf of the European Union, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter and rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in the Council's discussion to be held on 18 July 2003 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/709.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Javier Solana.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Solana to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting.

The Security Council will now hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno: There have been several developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the previous briefing to the Security Council on 7 July, especially the installation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. I will focus on the

situation in Bunia, while Mr. Ngongi, who has just completed an impressive two-year tour of duty as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will brief the Council on the developments relating to the Transitional Government.

The security situation in Bunia remains calm but tense, following a military operation undertaken by the Interim Emergency Multinational Force against the Union des patriotes congolais (UPC) on 11 July. The Multinational Force Action was in response to the UPC's continuing attempts to assert its authority and to undermine the weapon-free-zone policy established by the force. This resulted in some UPC casualties, in the confiscation of a large number of apparently new weapons and ammunition and in the destruction of various pieces of equipment belonging to the UPC. In a separate incident on 13 July, armed elements shot at the internally displaced persons camp at the Uruguayan base near the airport, and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) responded by returning fire.

The increased number of internally displaced persons returning to Bunia has required reinforced security measures, since many returnees, now estimated to number some 20,000 to 25,000, prefer to go to an internally displaced persons camp instead of returning home. In the meantime, the humanitarian situation, although much improved, remains a source of concern. A joint, high-level humanitarian assessment mission last week has found that, despite an improvement in the security situation in Bunia, many priorities, including camp conditions and the availability of basic services in the town, require immediate attention.

In the meantime, as indicated by the Secretary-General yesterday, MONUC, together with its partners, is stepping up efforts to implement the Ituri strategy, which was circulated widely to members of the Security Council and to other Member States. To that end, several concrete measures have been taken to operationalize the actions of the Ituri interim administration. Such initiatives include human rights training; preliminary recruitment of Iturian police that have taken up tasks at the airport in Bunia; bringing Radio Candip under the control of the Ituri Interim Administration; relocating the two makeshift medical clinics at the public hospital that is now guarded by MONUC; preparing an interim operation plan for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers; and establishing a flexible trust fund through which the financial and material needs of the Ituri Interim Administration will be funded. The trust fund currently contains contributions from the United States of $250,000, and Germany is also expected to contribute $100,000.

Despite these encouraging initial steps towards normalizing life in Bunia, many challenges lie ahead. Above all, the most difficult task will be to end the pervasive culture of war and impunity. To this end, the armed groups in Ituri in particular should be encouraged to engage in a political process. Many efforts are under way in this regard, including the third meeting of the Comité de concertation des groupes armés, which will be held next week in Bunia. However, the continuing ambitions of Mr. Thomas Lubanga in expanding his authority and that of the UPC outside the context of the Ituri Interim Administration remain a source of concern.

The international community as a whole needs to increase its efforts to assist the Ituri Interim Administration in restoring basic services in Ituri, especially police, judiciary and corrections. In this context, it would be important that special initiatives be developed expeditiously to develop such local capacity as soon as possible. A Department of Peacekeeping Operations MONUC mission is currently in Bunia to examine this issue and produce an action plan. In the meantime, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and MONUC are also working hard to ensure a seamless transition from the Interim Emergency Multinational Force to the MONUC force, the first Bangladeshi elements of which arrived in Bunia on 15 July. In order to continue deterring and dissuading further military action, it will be crucial to maintain the robust character of the troops deployed in Bunia.

Another challenge that must not be neglected is the apparent continued re-arming of the various Iturian groups. During the recent reconnaissance mission to Kasenye and during the searches of houses conducted by the Multinational Force in Bunia, significant numbers of brand-new weapons have very recently been encountered.

(*spoke in French*)

It may seem that the challenges facing us are even greater than the progress that has been made. Yet we are convinced that with the deployment of a robust

brigade-size force the vicious circle of impunity can be broken and the Ituri Interim Authority will be able to expand its authority throughout Ituri.

A great deal has already been achieved to this end.

I am grateful to Member States for quickly responding to the Secretary-General's appeal for an effective intervention in May. The fact that a multinational force was deployed by the European Union — the first operation of the European Union outside Europe — sends a clear and strong signal to all those who are concerned that the world is not reacting as it should to those who undermine peace efforts by engaging in destructive acts, which have cost the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. MONUC will continue to build on the political foundation that has been created through the deployment of Operation Artemis.

We have every confidence in the development of our cooperation with the European Union and with other Member States to assist the citizens of the Congo in overcoming the challenges still facing them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Guéhenno for the information that he has given us. The Council will now hear a briefing by Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Before I give him the floor, allow me, on behalf of the members of the Council, to extend our thanks once again to Mr. Ngongi for the dedication with which he served the cause of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during his two years of distinguished service in extremely difficult circumstances. As the Secretary-General has noted, Mr. Ngongi's tireless efforts contributed considerably to the recent progress in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I extend our appreciation to him, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Ngongi (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for your very kind words.

(*spoke in English*)

I wish to follow up on the statement made by Mr. Guéhenno, which has already touched on the critical areas, especially Ituri. I will focus on the transitional process.

It is with a great sense of relief and pleasure that I wish formally to inform the Council that yesterday, 17 July, Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (MLC), Mr. Azarias Ruberwa of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma), Mr. Yerodia Ndombasi of the former Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mr. Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma of the unarmed opposition were formally sworn in as vice-presidents of the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was a landmark event and a decisive moment in the four-year-old peace process. When I took over my functions almost two years ago, it sounded like a dream, but today it is a reality.

This is a remarkable development in the light of the fact that, following President Kabila's announcement on 30 June, several developments threatened to delay the calendar for the installation of the new Transitional Government. Those included RCD-Goma's unilateral decision on 10 July to repartition three military regions, which include areas from which the movement is to withdraw in accordance with the Bujumbura Act of Engagement. That decision came as a surprise to all, particularly as the issue was still under discussion in the Commission de Suivi. In addition, on 13 July the RCD-Goma ministerial delegates bound for Kinshasa refused to board a plane that had been dispatched by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) due to a disagreement relating to the number of bodyguards. Those two manoeuvres led to questions about the level of commitment of the RCD-Goma to participating in the transition process and to speculation that its ultimate intention might be the continued exercise of control over regions currently under its control. Following those developments, the International Committee for Support to the Transition (ICST) was convened on 13 July. It rejected the distribution by RCD-Goma of the military regions and of command structures and regretted that the disagreement over the number of bodyguards had impeded the RCD-Goma's arrival in Kinshasa.

On 15 July, at a meeting of the Commission de Suivi, all parties, with the exception of the RCD, agreed on a formula for the distribution of the military regions: three for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, two for the MLC, two for the RCD-Goma, one for the RCD/Kisangani Mouvement de libération (RCD/KML), one for the RCD-National

and one for the Mai-Mai. Of course, that distribution of military regions currently presents the greatest stumbling block, because RCD-Goma is contesting that decision and wishes to see an early session of the new cabinet discuss the issue.

I should like to inform the Council that following the assumption of duties by the new Foreign Minister, Mr. Antoine Ghonda, on 7 July, the formal handover of power between the outgoing and incoming ministers and vice-ministers took place on 15 and 16 July. Representatives of all components and entities of the inter-Congolese dialogue thus now occupy ministerial positions in the Transitional Government and are expected to be formally sworn in shortly.

There are several challenges on the way for the Transitional Government. Mr. Guéhenno has rightly focused on Ituri. With respect to the situation in Ituri, I can say only that it should not be regarded as just a short-term deployment of troops. I am encouraged to see the draft resolution, which contains wording for the deployment to Ituri of a robust force with an appropriate mandate. But additional action needs to be taken to end the reign of impunity, not only in Ituri but throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As I leave, I reflect that the Security Council adopts many resolutions deploying many troops around the world, and that the main driving force behind all those operations is the massive abuse of human rights and the grave humanitarian situation faced by populations. I would urge that those driving forces for the deployment of troops not be overlooked. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conditions are now more and more favourable for major humanitarian relief operations.

The establishment of the Transitional Government — four years after the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement — is a historic milestone. During that period, the international community, through MONUC and bilaterally, has played a decisive role in pushing the parties to fulfil their commitments. That effort should not be reduced. There will be crises and problems in the process — and there are signs of that already. But all the efforts that have been made to bring the Lusaka Peace Agreement to this stage and to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions will have been wasted if the Security Council does not maintain an active interest in moving the process forward.

However, the formation of a Transitional Government is not the end of the reconciliation process. The installation of the new, inclusive Government is only the beginning of a new chapter. As the Secretary-General stated in his second special report, immense challenges remain. A concerted and unified effort by all is necessary.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, very warmly and, through you, to extend my thanks to the members of the Security Council for the support that I have received for almost two years now. I believe that, without that support, I would not have been able to accomplish much of anything and, above all, that the personnel of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) — which works in truly difficult conditions — would not have had the courage necessary to carry out their activities.

I wish also to express my heartfelt thanks to the Secretary-General, who provided me with the opportunity to participate in a peacekeeping operation. That added a new dimension to my career at the United Nations. Now, more than ever before, I am convinced that there can be never be any progress without peace and security in countries. I wish also to pay tribute to the Congolese people, who supported me during those two difficult years, sometimes marked by misunderstandings due to the need to implement the Security Council's decisions. But, ultimately, I think that the Congolese can be proud of having been able to resolve the problem. They are on the path to peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I am taking the floor on behalf of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Mr. President, I wish to thank you, first of all for organizing this public meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and for giving the European Union the opportunity to address the Security Council on that relevant issue. On behalf of the European Union, it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. He is ready to take the floor as soon as you will allow him to do so.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

Mr. Solana (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor before the Council after having just completed the mission to the Great Lakes region, which enabled me to speak with Presidents Kabila, Kagame and Museveni and to visit Bunia, where the Interim Emergency Multinational Force, Artemis, is deployed under European Union auspices. I should like to share with you some thoughts, some European Union commitments and some concerns.

In response to the Secretary-General's appeal, the European Union decided to deploy a multinational force to Bunia. That operation — a first for the European Union, which had never before sent military contingents outside Europe — made it possible to stop the massacres at Bunia and helped to relaunch the peace process, which had stalled at Kinshasa.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In fact, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been characterized from its outset by a fundamental anomaly: the coexistence of the political option and the military option. On the one hand, the belligerent parties negotiate and sign ceasefire agreements, while on the other, those same persons or groups continue their military operations on the ground in the hope of achieving a military victory. That ambiguity has been perpetuated by what we have called "negative forces", present in all the components and armed units, for whom maintenance of the status quo seems more desirable than implementation of the peace agreement, since that would result in the loss of their personal power.

Those "negative forces" have done everything possible to defeat the peace process several times. They have not succeeded, thanks to the determination of the Congolese people and their leaders, who wanted peace, and thanks to the vigilance and resolve of the international community. However, they have not given up completely on their objectives. The escalation of the Ituri crisis gave those forces a new opportunity to jeopardize the peace process: the capture of Bunia by the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), the reaction of the Kinshasa Government and the offensive launched against Beni by the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD), with the risk of a direct intervention by Uganda and Rwanda, led, inevitably, to the undermining of the Sun City agreements.

I believe that the rapid deployment of the European Multinational Force halted that dangerous downward spiral in the process and made it possible to relaunch negotiations, which had been bogged down for weeks. The agreement related to the staff of the armed forces has finally been concluded, thus creating the conditions for the establishment of a Government of National Unity and transitional institutions that involve all Congolese parties. That was a fundamental step made possible by the commitment of, among others, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Moustapha Niasse, and the delegation of facilitators from the Republic of South Africa. Here, I should like to pay tribute to them on behalf of the European Union, which, through its Special Representative, assisted them throughout the negotiation period in Pretoria and Kinshasa. An important role was also played by the International Committee in Support of the Transition, which paved the way for the agreement on the military issue.

The European Union's mission to Bunia has been going smoothly thus far. After the minor incidents that marked the beginning of the operation and led the Force to use its weapons, the situation stabilized rapidly. The Force was able to secure the airport and the refugee camps, to prohibit the open bearing of arms in Bunia from 24 June onwards, and to establish checkpoints at the city's entrances. The Force reached its full deployment at the beginning of July, one week ahead of schedule. Thus, the objectives set for the force have been attained.

The improvement in security conditions is obvious; there are many positive indicators, as I saw a few days ago on the ground. Humanitarian organizations are now able to leave Bunia to visit peoples that they could not reach before. A constant flow of refugees — 1,000 to 1,500 people daily — is returning to the city, and the Ituri Interim Administration can again carry out some activities. On my trip to Bunia, I was able to see that improvement for myself. I saw the smiling faces of the children in the refugee camps, despite conditions that remain precarious, and the warm thanks expressed by the members of the interim administration of Ituri and the gratitude of non-governmental organizations for the action of the European Union force are a tribute to what has been accomplished.

But it is essential to preserve the achievements made so far. For that reason, as the 27 May report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/566) emphasizes, a strengthened presence of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) must be deployed in Bunia within the planned time frame. That force must, in our view, have a mandate and rules of engagement similar to those of the European Union Force — in other words, a mandate under Chapter VII. It must also have the equipment and the military resources needed for the mission's functioning and for the implementation of the mandate and the rules of engagement. If we wish to be able to re-establish security in the region beyond the limits of the capital city, we shall also have to deploy greater forces.

We believe that that point is of capital importance if we wish to avoid further difficulties being created by the European Force's departure at the end of its mandate. The commander of the Artemis operation has done everything necessary to ensure that the transition to the strengthened MONUC force will take place under the best possible conditions.

At the same time, strong pressure should be brought to bear on the warlords who are leading the militias. The European Union resolutely backs the proposal for an embargo on arms aimed at North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. The European Union intends to promote initiatives aimed at preventing those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from enjoying impunity.

In our view, efforts to stabilize the military situation must be accompanied and supported by a process of political normalization through the consolidation of the interim institutions set up by the Ituri Pacification Commission; the return to the rule of law; the observance by the various militias of the ceasefire agreement signed in Dar es-Salaam last May; the control, and, ultimately, the abolition of those militias; and an end to external interference. We believe it essential that MONUC succeed in setting up a political unit in Bunia that is capable of administering this particularly delicate and complex process.

The European Union, for its part, is determined to use every means at its disposal to support the political process now under way. That involves technical and financial support for the Ituri Interim Administration and the Ituri Pacification Commission, as well as for the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating combatants into the Ituri district. The European Union also commits itself to supporting programmes for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Ituri and the local reconciliation process.

We are also prepared and committed to continue supporting the transitional process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo until the elections are held. Throughout this period, the Union will strive, through the use of every means at its disposal, to make a substantial contribution to funding for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of the Democratic Republic in the Congo in all areas, in accordance with the priorities set by the recently established Government of National Unity. In that context, I am pleased to announce the adoption on 9 July of a programme of strategic support amounting to 205 million euros.

Among the priorities of the new Government will be the creation of the integrated and restructured National Republican Army and the start of a demobilization and reintegration programme for all combatants who have not been integrated into that army. The international community will have to give its determined support to these complex priority projects. The European Union undertakes to firmly support the demobilization and reintegration programme. As members are aware, the European Union has also begun discussions on support for the peacekeeping forces of the African Union, which have just resulted in the adoption of a financing mechanism, announced by the European Union at the Maputo Summit.

The holding of elections within the timetable set by the Peace Agreement is a further challenge that the transitional Government will have to face. President Kabila has again put to me his request for assistance, which he has already made on several occasions. I can inform members that the European Union, for its part, is in the process of examining arrangements for providing aid, which could include significant support for the Independent Electoral Commission. The Commission's first task will be to conduct a census on which future electoral rolls will be based. We are all aware that that is a huge task, given the country's large size and limited infrastructure and communication links. That is why it is necessary to begin that operation immediately, even though the elections may not be held for another two years. In that context, the

logistical support of MONUC will be indispensable. Here the model used in Mozambique, where the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) made its logistical and transportation resources available to the national electoral commission, could serve as a precedent.

(*spoke in English*)

Before concluding, I would like to make a final point. Progress in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its positive effects throughout the central African region have made it possible to envisage organizing a regional conference on the peace, security and development of the Great Lakes region. The European Union has been calling for such a conference for many years. The Secretary-General has entrusted its preparation to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, whose already considerable work is to be applauded. The holding of such a conference clearly depends on the consolidation of the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, where, regrettably, the situation is still deteriorating and where there is still a considerable way to go. The conference should, however, remain a priority objective for all of us.

With the establishment of the Government of National Unity in Kinshasa, I think that a window of opportunity has been opened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region as a whole. This fundamental step in the peace process has been made possible not only as a result of the desire for peace of the Congolese people and of their leaders — beginning with President Kabila, to whom I pay tribute — but also because of the unfailing commitment of the international community, which has been able to speak with one voice and bring the necessary pressure to bear on the warring factions to defeat the resistance put up by the enemies of peace. That commitment must be maintained and, indeed, reinforced now that the new Government of National Unity is setting out on the difficult road of transition towards elections.

I would like to restate the firm intention of the European Union to step up its efforts to give the new Congolese Government the political, economic and financial support it needs successfully to complete the complicated transitional process, put an end to the suffering of the Congolese people and guide the country towards democracy.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and his team for their tireless and determined efforts to resolve the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We understand that the new Special Representative, Mr. Swing, has had a good start, and we would like to congratulate him on that and wish him well. I would like also to express our gratitude to Mr. Guéhenno, to Special Representative Ngongi and to High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (EU) Javier Solana for their briefings.

Germany fully agrees with the assessment that has just been given by the EU High Representative, Mr. Solana, and we fully support the EU efforts to support the peace process. We recognize that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region in general remains difficult. The recent violence in Burundi in particular is very worrying.

But there are positive developments and encouraging signs as well. While the responsibility for the success of the peace process ultimately lies with the protagonists on the ground, we share the views expressed by Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Solana that the peace process has to be strongly supported and accompanied by the international community.

From the outset, Germany has given its full support to the recommendations of the Secretary-General on adjusting the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to confront the altered realities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As requested in Security Council resolution 1484 (2003), we have supported the deployment of a EU-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force to stabilize the situation in Bunia prior to the arrival of new MONUC contingents. The draft resolution, which is presently being negotiated in the Council, introduces an ambitious but viable adjustment to the mandate of MONUC.

We welcome the focus of military forces on the problematic regions in eastern Congo and on Kinshasa, in order to provide security for the Transitional Government. We also support the expanded peace-building components related to establishing a proper police force, respect for the rule of law, justice, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

In our view, the problem of child soldiers should be accorded special significance in the DDR process. At present, we are examining the possibility of providing support in this field and would be interested in hearing about possible initiatives by the United Nations Children's Fund or the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Otunnu. We are very concerned about reports that the recruitment of child soldiers in the region continues unabated, in particular, and most recently, the information that the majority of Forces nationals de libération (FNL) rebels killed in last week's fighting near Bujumbura were only 11 to 15 years old.

We share the Secretary-General's view that militia leaders such as Lubanga must be held accountable for such acts and other gross abuses of human rights and humanitarian law.

I would like also to draw attention to the fact that the recruitment of child soldiers is a crime according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In that respect, we note with interest the announcement made by the ICC Prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, that his Office has designated the situation in Ituri as a most urgent situation to be followed, that he will use all the powers at his disposal to prevent future crimes and combat impunity and that, if necessary, he will seek authorization from a Pre-Trial Chamber to start an investigation.

The political sensitivity displayed by the ICC Prosecutor, as well as his circumspection in describing the complementarity between his role and the role of the Transitional Government, deserve particular mention and approbation. In a policy paper presented at a public hearing in The Hague, on 17 and 18 June 2003, the Prosecutor elaborated on the principle of complementarity of Court action vis-à-vis national action and drew two important conclusions with immediate relevance to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. First, that the Office of the Prosecutor must monitor and assess efforts made by national authorities; and secondly, that the Office of the Prosecutor must cooperate with national jurisdictions and use its best efforts to help State authorities fulfil their duty to investigate and prosecute at the national level.

Germany views the positions taken by the Prosecutor as yet another indication that he will exercise his important office in the most responsible and fair manner. We reiterate our encouragement to the Transitional Government and the ICC Prosecutor to explore practical ways of cooperation.

We further believe that it would be appropriate for the Council, which has been against impunity in a very outspoken way, to appreciate these endeavours and, against the backdrop of these developments, to engage in a policy dialogue with Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, concerning both the case at stake and other broader issues. This situation illustrates that the Security Council and the ICC are committed to very similar objectives — or rather, to the very same objectives.

We welcome the imposition of an arms embargo against all rebel groups operating in eastern Congo. That is the right approach to restrict the military resources of Congolese militias as well as to protect neighbouring States from rebel attacks emanating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This approach, together with the activities of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, could prove to be more effective than the rather isolated DDR programmes have been so far.

However, we wish that the draft resolution now being negotiated could also establish an efficient monitoring regime, and that the Security Council could manifest its political will to impose punitive measures on those who violate the embargo. We hope that this aspect will be considered in future resolutions if it cannot be included in the present one.

Reports about continuing weapons deliveries by neighbouring States to the rebel groups, if confirmed, will have a profoundly negative effect on our bilateral relations with those countries.

Given the situation on the ground and the challenges that the Transitional Government and the international community are facing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the challenges are enormous. If we want to translate the vision of political and social stability, of democracy, of the rule of law and the respect for human rights, into reality, both the Congolese and the international community, including MONUC, have to live up to their responsibility.

Mr. Pujalte (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence in our midst today of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. We thank Mr. Jean-Marie

Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their briefings on the situation in the country. Our thanks go also to Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, for having shared with the Council his thoughts and perceptions inspired by his recent visit to the Great Lakes region.

There is no doubt that the scale of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the international community's commitment to promote peace in that country, have left their mark on the work of the Security Council, which has been constantly alert and attentive to developments on the ground and has taken measures to make a constructive contribution and to support the parties involved in the quest for solutions.

Recently the Security Council adopted resolution 1484 (2003) which approved the deployment of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia in response to the violent events which took place in that region in May. We are grateful to France for its commitment, participation and leadership. Without doubt, the Multinational Force has made it possible to stabilize the situation. At the same time we wish to convey our appreciation for the invaluable work done by the Uruguayan contingent of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), whose presence made it possible to keep the situation in Bunia under control until the Multinational Force could be deployed.

In recent weeks, Security Council members have been working to draw up and define the terms of a draft resolution to strengthen the mandate of MONUC, in keeping with the recommendations of the Secretary-General and with a view to giving the mission a robust mandate. With this conviction, Council members have now virtually agreed upon a draft text which is likely to be adopted within the next few days.

Given the importance of disarmament and demobilization in the peace process, as well as the establishment of a police force responsible for domestic security, the draft resolution also includes provisions to enable MONUC to support the Transitional Government in this area.

The coordination of action between the Multinational Force and MONUC is very important, bearing in mind that MONUC will take control of the situation on the ground on 1 September 2003.

We hail Bangladesh's decision to deploy a 3,800-strong contingent in Bunia to replace the Multinational Force. At the same time, the Security Council has succeeded in maintaining ongoing dialogue with all the parties involved. Its members have visited the region on a number of occasions, for the purpose of encouraging the parties to fulfil their commitments, and directly to convey the determination of the Security Council to support the peace process. We welcome the progress made in the political area. We are pleased to note the peaceful manner in which the return of political leaders to the Democratic Republic of the Congo is taking place, in particular that of Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo. In that regard, we are particularly pleased to note that the members of the Transitional Government have taken office, in particular the four Vice-Presidents, who were sworn in yesterday at Kinshasa. We wish the authorities of the Transitional Government every success, and we trust that they will be able to uphold their commitment to peace and political dialogue.

There are still many outstanding issues, particularly the question of human rights. In that regard, there are many matters to be addressed by the Transitional Government. The Government will have to pay special attention to trials to punish the crimes and violations that have taken place and to prevent impunity. On the humanitarian level, every effort must be made to ensure the safe return of refugees and displaced persons. Lastly, we encourage neighbouring countries to commit themselves to supporting the peace process so that we may put an end to this conflict that has caused so much damage to the Congolese population and to the region in general.

Mr. de La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): We are pleased to have the Secretary-General with us this morning.

We would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Ngongi for the briefings they have just given us, which have described the contrasting situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the last Security Council mission. We have noted some very positive developments, for which we should be glad

and which we should now seek to encourage. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that, despite those positive developments, some grounds for concern continue to exist. For example, fighting has not come to a definitive end in the Kivus. Moreover, in Ituri the relative stability that now prevails in Bunia is still fragile. I shall come back to this point later.

I fully associate myself with the statement made today by Mr. Javier Solana. I very much concur with his analysis and I thank him for the details he has given us following his recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Through Operation Artemis, the Member States of the European Union — including France as the lead nation and the other countries that have joined the Interim Emergency Multinational Force, whose contribution I wish to recognize — it has been possible to prevent a humanitarian tragedy by intervening at a decisive moment. By embodying the resolve of the Security Council and demonstrating the European Union's interest in the Great Lakes region of Africa, the deployment of the Force has also made it possible to consolidate the political process under way in Kinshasa. In that regard, as has already been said, we can only be gratified at the launching of the transitional period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the swearing-in yesterday of the four Vice-Presidents and tomorrow's first scheduled meeting of the ministerial council of the Transitional Government of National Unity.

By intervening resolutely on the ground the Multinational Force made it possible to stabilize the situation in Bunia. As Mr. Solana has said, those displaced by violence are gradually returning to the town; militia, which have been kept under control and urged to no longer carry weapons, have found themselves rendered relatively harmless; and interim institutions have been strengthened and are gaining confidence and trust. Bunia is once again becoming a normal place in a Democratic Republic of the Congo that is on the road to normalization. However, as I have said, we must remain vigilant because the situation remains fragile.

By mobilizing in that way, the European Union and its member States have also helped to strengthen the peace process by making additional resources available and by providing support to the new Congolese national institutions.

The need to effectively replace the Multinational Force in Bunia on 1 September 2003 has no doubt increased awareness about the importance of strengthening the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The draft resolution that we will adopt shortly will give the Mission a more robust mandate and will increase its personnel, particularly in Ituri, where 3,800 men will be deployed with appropriate equipment, pursuant to the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

If we want the Congolese peace process to take root permanently, we must ensure respect for the principle of the unity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the whole of its territory. The holding of elections in two years' time, at the end of the transitional period, will be meaningful only if the elections involve the entire country. We should also ensure respect for the security and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all States of the region. Those countries should be able to live in peace within their borders. In that regard, the formulas already mentioned in the Council — such as, for example, a declaration of good-neighbourliness made within a regional context that could eventually be endorsed by a future international conference on peace in the Great Lakes region — merit further development and encouragement.

I would add that combating impunity is also essential. In that regard, we have noted with interest the proposal made recently by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

I would like to underscore that the deployment of Operation Artemis in Bunia is a particularly important event in the relationship between the European Union and the United Nations. That act represents a first step, which will undoubtedly be decisive, towards cooperation in the area of peacekeeping.

In conclusion, I would like to tell Mr. Ngongi once again how much we appreciated his work at the head of MONUC. The baton has now been very successfully passed to Ambassador Swing, who assumed his new duties with his well-known competence. We assure him of our support.

Mr. Boubacar Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to welcome the presence in the Chamber of the Secretary-General. His presence here reaffirms, if indeed there was a need for

such reassurance, the great importance he attaches to our debate today.

Like previous speakers, allow me also to convey my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for the comprehensive briefing he has just given us on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to convey our gratitude to Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, who has just returned from a visit to Central Africa, for his extremely informative statement, which my delegation has listened to closely. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi for his informative statement and for the effective manner in which he guided the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) during a particularly difficult period replete with challenges.

The holding of this meeting 10 days after the session devoted to the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo illustrates our shared concern and determination to find a speedy and lasting solution to the fratricidal conflict that has ravaged that country for several years now. The date of 30 June 2003, which is a key day in the country's political development, marked the official announcement of the membership of the Transitional Government of National Unity. That important event was followed by the swearing-in of the four Vice-Presidents, with the swearing-in of the other members of the new Government team being expected tomorrow.

This is a clear demonstration of the will of the Congolese people to reconcile their differences and forget the bitterness of the past so that, together, they can devote their energy to building a homogeneous and strong nation that can take charge of its own destiny.

Furthermore, that demonstration of will fully reflects the vision of President Kabila, who recently stated:

> "The elements and entities utilized in the context of the inter-Congolese dialogue are now a part of the past. Since we are embarking upon a process of transition, such labels must disappear. Neither tribal nor ethnic considerations, neither political affinities nor regional factionalism, can take precedence over the highest interests of the country."

While welcoming such significant progress, we would like to remind the Council that the journey ahead will be long and rife with hidden dangers. The Congolese people have not yet completed their arduous task and, with the support of the international community, must work to meet those challenges.

My delegation believes that one of those challenges will be the dismantling of the armed groups, whose pernicious actions, as we are all well aware, have contributed to the fragmentation of the country. The effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, in which priority must be given to the problem of child soldiers, is thus of major importance and cannot be ignored. This must be accompanied by appropriate arms-control measures.

Furthermore, we cannot remain silent in the face of the numerous violations of human rights and international humanitarian law — massacres, rape and other atrocities — committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country. We believe that there can be no definitive peace in the country if impunity is tolerated, whether overtly or covertly.

Such violations must be the subject of intensive investigation, so that the sponsors of such crimes and those who perpetrated them are punished to the fullest extent of the law. To that end, it is our duty to contribute to the establishment of the necessary institutional framework.

Furthermore, the decision of the Security Council to send the Interim Emergency Multinational Force to Bunia has proved to be a wise and effective one, as the presence of that Force on the ground has, at the very least, made it possible to restore calm and reassure the population. In order to consolidate that action and expand the Force throughout the territory, my delegation shares the view that the troops of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) should be strengthened and provided with a more robust mandate. The information provided earlier by Mr. Guéhenno further strengthens that conviction.

In this connection, the draft resolution already negotiated at the expert level should by adopted by the

Council as soon as possible, as that will facilitate the transition, under conditions of security and in a timely manner, from the multinational force to the second MONUC task force.

The illegal exploitation of natural resources is another very important aspect of the climate of violence that has prevailed to date in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A victim of insatiable greed, the country has been subjected to systematic dismemberment by armed movements and groups that have bled it dry. Apart from the economic profits generated for these groups, this has led to the balkanization of the territory and the consequent strengthening of the influence of such groups, which have thereby consolidated their political domination. That situation, which is very damaging to the unity and integrity of the country, has further served to unravel the social fabric and weaken central authority. It is urgently necessary to reverse that trend and thereby allow the Congolese people to regain sovereignty over their national resources.

My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Kassem and his team; their insight and skill have helped to reveal the mechanisms by means of which such plunder has occurred. We encourage them to continue their activities, and await with interest their mid-term assessment, which, we are sure, will shed new light on this issue.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that, over and above the efforts of the Congolese people — efforts backed by a genuine will to succeed — the cooperation of neighbouring States will be indispensable for the ultimate restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Without their understanding and political will, the many efforts that are being made will not succeed. That is why my delegation would like once again urgently to appeal to them to make the best possible use of their positive influence to contribute to the realization of that objective.

There is no doubt that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a complex web and that it has many ramifications. If it is to untangle that web, the international community has no choice but to assist the Congolese people in their quest for national harmony, stability and development. What is at stake here is the future of peace in the subregion, in Africa and throughout the world.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We would like at the outset to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno; the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi; and the Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign Policy and Security Policy of the European Union, Mr. Javier Solana, for their briefings on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We pay special tribute to Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of peace in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The holding of this meeting at such a crucial moment in the political process in the Congo reflects the great importance that the international community attaches to this issue and its concern about the events that are unfolding in the country, as well as its resolve to put an end to the bloodshed and to do everything in its power in order to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo can build a future of peace and prosperity for its citizens and contribute to regional peace and stability.

Angola, as a neighbouring country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is particularly concerned about the situation and has done everything within its power to put an end to the Congolese crisis. Among the efforts made with a view to reaching a peaceful settlement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of Angola sponsored the Luanda Agreement of 6 September 2002, which established the basis for a settlement in the Ituri area and remains the basis for the attainment of peace and a political process in the region.

The consequences of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has inflicted upon the population profound suffering and atrocities, provoked the indignation of the international community, prompting it to act swiftly and with determination. Indeed, we have witnessed the grossest violations human rights — blind acts of violence and naked atrocities perpetrated against civilians. The dramatic humanitarian situation has placed the Congolese population in an untenable situation, and the recruitment and use of children as soldiers has provoked general indignation on the part of all peace-loving nations.

Faced with such a dismal state of affairs, the Security Council took decisive action and has expressed its readiness to continue addressing the Congolese issue with determination and a sense of purpose. The deployment of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force to Bunia to put an end to a situation that threatened to derail the entire peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and caused consternation to all of us, was a clear signal of the international community's determination. The Security Council is currently considering a mandate for the United Nations mission in Congo that would constitute a serious commitment to peace and an end to human rights violations and impunity and provide for the effective provision of humanitarian assistance to the Congolese people.

It is clear that the conflict has a decisive external factor. The international community has been addressing that issue. In our view, however, it should step up its efforts and adopt measures to deal with it decisively. It is our belief that unless the issue of foreign intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is properly addressed and resolved, it will be very difficult — if not impossible — to establish sustainable peace in the country and ensure for the Congolese people the peace they yearn for so dearly.

The proposals contained in the second special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (S/2003/566), which the members of the Security Council have expressed their willingness to support, might represent an important breakthrough for the attainment of the goals outlined in the report.

Consequently, the likely adoption of a resolution containing provisions in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations, against the background of a Government of national unity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, represents, it is to be hoped, a solid framework for the achievement of sustainable peace in the country.

In that connection, we welcome the establishment of the Government of national unity and transition as an important landmark on the road to peace and national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is our expectation that the United Nations and the international community will play a decisive role in assisting the Congolese Government and people in the transitional phase.

The Security Council's adoption of a new resolution and the deployment of MONUC with a new mandate will place on the Congolese political leaders the responsibility to allow the transitional institutions to function at the national level, to address the question of human rights as a national priority, to put an end to the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the country, which must serve the Congolese people, and to look into the future with confidence and work for the common good.

As we now see it today, the international community is prepared to invest much good will and significant resources to ensure a peaceful transition and to assist the economic and social reconstruction of the country. It is up to the Congolese people to seize that opportunity for a new beginning in order to build a united, peaceful, prosperous and respected nation.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): My delegation joins in expressing satisfaction that the Secretary-General was with us earlier this morning. We are also grateful for the presentations that were made by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome back to the Council Mr. Javier Solana, the Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

The United States welcomes the inauguration yesterday of the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and agrees that this is an extremely important and vital step towards unifying the country, ending five years of war and launching the country on a democratic path. I would like to affirm here that the United States strongly supports the Transitional Government. We believe that several important questions and challenges face the new Government as it strives to re-establish security throughout the country, to integrate its military and police, to reform the economy and to implement the two-year democratic transition. To succeed in those tasks, it is critical that members of the Government work collectively and collaboratively and that States in the region act cooperatively to support the process of bringing peace and stability to the people of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and others in the Great Lakes region who have been so severely affected by the conflict.

The United States would like to thank Mr. Solana and, through him, the European Union and the countries contributing to the multinational force, especially the Government of France for the lead role that it has played in that regard. The European Union's effort to improve the security situation in Bunia is much appreciated. Troops from the contributing countries have been asked to carry out a dangerous and important mission, and the United States praises their courage, their effort and the contribution that they have made to peace in the Congo, especially in the Ituri region. In that connection, it will be important to lend continuing support to the fledgling Ituri administration so that the citizens of that province can lead their lives in peace and tranquillity, rather than under the terror of rival militias.

Finally, I would like to express appreciation for the excellent work that Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi has done in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General during the two years that he spent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to thank him personally for the many courtesies that he extended to the Security Council mission during its recent visit to the Central African countries during the month of June.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express satisfaction that Mr. Ngongi's successor, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is Ambassador William Swing, a fellow American with vast experience in the African continent. He is one of our most accomplished diplomats. We are confident that he will serve the Secretary-General and the United Nations well in that new capacity.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation, too, would like to express its satisfaction that the Secretary-General came to today's meeting of the Security Council. We are grateful to Mr. Guéhenno, Mr. Ngongi and Mr. Solana for their contributions to the Council's work today. We wish to express particular thanks to Mr. Ngongi. Only a few weeks ago, the members of the Security Council saw him in action. He carried out an enormous amount of positive work, and he deserves the highest praise.

The Russian Federation welcomes the establishment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a Transitional Government of national unity. The country has entered upon a new and very important stage of the peace process that began with the 1999 Lusaka Agreement and which acquired a comprehensive nature in the agreements concluded in Sun City and Pretoria. The Government has assumed responsibility towards the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community for the restoration of constitutional order to the country. Its work will not be easy. The most important thing is that all political forces that have become part of the Government should be guided solely by comprehensive national interests focused on collaborative efforts to restore the country from its ruins, ashes and isolation. The millions of Congolese lives sacrificed in this conflict requires us to do so.

The country's new leadership will have to draw up a specific programme of action for the transition period. Among the objectives of greatest priority are a timetable for the preparation and holding of elections at various levels, the full restoration of State institutions, the reform of the army and security forces, the establishment of control over natural resources, the rehabilitation of the economy and social life and the restoration of friendly relations with all neighbouring States.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is a separate issue; its successful resolution will determine the fate of the peace process. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is awash in weapons. In the light of that reality, there should be a review of the disarmament programmes. We cannot rely solely on the voluntary handover of weapons; as we see it, participation by the national army in that work would do an enormous service to Congolese society. Naturally, such activity must be monitored by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and must be carried out with assistance from donor countries.

My delegation agrees with the view — already expressed here — that it is very important that the international community and the United Nations, including the Security Council, not weaken their support for the transitional structures of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during this historic period for that country. This is dictated by Security Council

decisions and by the recommendations of numerous Council missions to that country and to the region. We also bear our share of responsibility for ensuring the success of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese Government has every right to count on our assistance.

Now I should like to say a few words about the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are grateful to the Government of France, to other States of the European Union and to other countries that have undertaken the dangerous task of stopping the bloodshed in Bunia. We understand that the involvement of the Multinational Forces — given the strict terms for its stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — is an emergency measure. Moreover, the Force is not in a position by themselves to ensure security and stability for Ituri in such a brief period of time. The major objective here is to accomplish the timely replacement of the Multinational Force with a strengthened United Nations presence. We need to prevent the emergence of a security vacuum and to ensure a smooth transition in that replacement.

We support the observations and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's most recent report on MONUC (S/2003/566) aimed at adapting the Mission's mandate to the current reality in the country. We shall be prepared to adopt a draft resolution with new tasks for the United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Congo.

One more important note: atrocious crimes against humanity have been perpetrated in Bunia, in Ituri and in other regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council has not forgotten about them. The criminals must be punished, and they will be punished. Here, we shall not yield.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to ask a question of the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who will speak during today's meeting. International forums, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations are now undertaking specific efforts to put an end to impunity for mass violations of human rights and of the norms of international humanitarian law — crimes being committed against the Congolese people. Does the Transitional Government of national unity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo intend to undertake national measures to prosecute such criminals? I ask that question because, during the Security Council missions to Central Africa and West Africa, we asked heads of State or Government and leaders of armed groups a similar question. They assured us that they had absolutely nothing to do with those acts and were not participating in them, but they did not always express a readiness to prosecute those crimes and to punish the perpetrators. Therefore, I eagerly await the ambassador's answer.

In conclusion, we should like to note that peace in the Congo depends to a great extent on the regional environment. The success of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo creates new opportunities for cooperation among the countries in that region of Africa with regard to such critical problems as providing for the security of international borders. Here, too, the United Nations can provide the necessary assistance. The establishment of a transitional Government for the Congo is one of the basic prerequisites for the convening of an international conference on the Great Lakes region. A solution to the problem related to the ceasefire and the conclusion of the transitional period in Burundi must launch such a regional process. The drafting and signing by interested States of a declaration on good-neighbourly relations could become an important foundation for that regional project.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We had a telling series of briefings this morning from a very high-grade team, and I should like to thank them for that. It is a great pleasure to see the High Representative for the European Union with us again, giving us an analysis of the situation on the ground on the basis of his recent visit. I think we all have to agree with that analysis; I certainly do.

But, in my introduction, I particularly want to thank Amos Ngongi for the work that he has done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in an incredibly difficult period over the past two years or more. We have had the same experience in Sierra Leone, where the Security Council and the executive of the United Nations have been involved in turning a country around from a dreadful and — in humanitarian terms — deeply distressing conflict. The path has never been smooth or easy. But he has overseen that transformation on the ground with a team for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) that, again, deserves tribute in a way which the Security Council should acknowledge

and is, I think, acknowledging this morning. So I thank you, Amos.

That effort by the United Nations is seamless and depends very much on the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Headquarters team. Before he leaves the room, I should like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for what he has done in that respect, and to say that that applies to his whole team as well as to him personally. You may now go, Sir.

The analysis we have heard this morning has, I think, rightly focused on the move in the political context. The swearing-in of the four Vice-Presidents of the new national coalition Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo exemplifies what we have been trying to achieve with the implementation of the Lusaka Accord, and the United Kingdom would like to congratulate all those involved.

But primarily, I think, congratulations go to the Congolese people. Those of us who have been on missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to its neighbours have always — in each of the four years that we have been there, and in all the cities beyond Kinshasa and the towns and the villages that we have visited — been struck by the appeal for peace in the eyes of the Congolese people, an appeal to the United Nations and to the international community. I hope that, if this new Government's officials take up their responsibilities with political will, with honour and with honesty, they will repay the Congolese people the time that they have had to wait for peace. I think that that is something that should come out of this meeting, because those 50 million or so Africans who have suffered so much over the past few years will still deserve our help in the coming period. Ituri and Bunia, of course, are a particular part of that. The Multinational Force has made a significant contribution towards improving the security situation in Bunia. I am proud to be a European Union (EU) member in praising the EU for what it has done, and I pay particular tribute to France for its leadership of that.

But we must not allow this intervention to undertake a task that is then jeopardized by allowing a security vacuum to open up after its departure. We need the full deployment of an increased MONUC brigade force, but we need it on time and with the capability to ensure that the gap between the two forces is negligible and that MONUC is visibly as strong as possible from day one. We all understand the threats to both the present and the future force. The Security Council itself has to take the responsibility that that is the case, even if it is the Secretariat that carries out the task. I hope that in the coming days we shall ensure that that happens.

The Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) under Mr. Lubanga has tested the Interim Emergency Multinational Force. He and they will test MONUC, especially if they believe it to be a vulnerable force. We look forward to discussing further with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations how MONUC is to be configured to deter and deal with a UPC challenge. That is connected with the wider question raised by Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Ngongi, of what Jean-Marie Guéhenno called the need to end the pervasive culture of war and impunity, which, as Mr. Ngongi said, needs additional action. We have to make sure that those who have committed crimes against the Congolese people are brought to account.

If Ambassador Konuzin had not done so, I would have asked the question — an open question because the Congolese people and Government need our support. Do they wish to start a reconciliation process that involves justice for the victims and therefore prosecution of the worst abuses? Or, if they want to pass it to the international community, are we going to be ready to support the International Criminal Court or any other mechanism, to make sure that those responsible, some of whose names we already know, understand from this meeting — if they have not understood it any earlier — that they will be examined, investigated and brought to a court for their actions during this conflict if they are shown to have abused humanitarian law and human rights norms?

We look forward to adopting soon a draft resolution that increases MONUC's ceiling. The Chapter VII authorization is important. It should help to deter violence, but only if it is credibly embodied on the ground — hence the importance of careful military planning.

Like Germany and others, we support the arms embargo in the draft resolution and would like to see a monitoring panel established to help the Council oversee its implementation.

We have all put our finger on the humanitarian situation. I agree with Mr. Ngongi that the conditions are now more favourable for major relief operations, but they need to be organized by the international

community with the support of the United Nations. Beyond that, I very much agree with the High Representative. We have been here before, but we have never implemented the thought that a regional conference is very necessary to construct the framework for an economic regeneration of the region, which should include structures for maintaining political and security stability. It does need the coherence of the regional leaderships. I am sorry that, up to now, they have not all agreed that a conference would be a good thing. We now think that it would be. I hope that the United Nations will put its weight behind that thought.

Finally, we have heard this morning that what is needed in the Congo is the maintenance of active interest. That certainly goes for the United Kingdom. But I think that the Security Council as a whole intends to maintain its active interest and should take some credit for its persistence in insisting that the Lusaka accord be implemented in full — it is now being implemented through many resolutions and our four missions to the region. I hope that the focus that we have put on this region through our activity will indeed be maintained into the future.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation wishes to express thanks for the useful and detailed briefing of Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative of the European Union (EU), as well as for the information provided by the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and the additional information provided by Mr. Ngongi.

I wish also to thank the European Union, particularly France, for its generous contribution to the Multinational Force deployed in Bunia and to highlight the dedication and performance of the Uruguayan contingent in very difficult circumstances.

During the past year, with the exception of the north-eastern part of the country, we have seen significant progress, particularly the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the political agreement achieved between the various conflicting factions, which made it possible to develop the All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are pleased to note the promulgation of the Transitional Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the recent formation of the Government of National Unity, which brings together representatives of all sectors and factions that until recently were in open conflict. That is a remarkable development.

The first steps, which are always the most difficult, have been taken. But we should not underestimate the enormous difficulties still before the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is now incumbent on the Government to pursue its goals of re-establishing security and sovereignty throughout the country and to reform the armed forces, the police and the judiciary. In this difficult process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be able to rely on the support of the international community, and particularly the support of the countries of the region, especially the neighbouring ones.

Notwithstanding those advances, the situation in the Kivu and Ituri districts is still marked by suffering and grave human rights violations committed by various rebel factions. My country categorically condemns the acts of violence, assassinations and other such crimes being perpetrated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly against the civilian police. Those acts must not go unpunished, and their perpetrators must ultimately answer for them. I support what the representative of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Greenstock of the United Kingdom have said recently in that regard. This is a challenge for the entire international community, but especially for the Congolese people and particularly the Transitional Government.

At the same time, we would like to reiterate our concern at the humanitarian situation in Bunia and the surrounding areas. We call on the parties involved to provide full and free access to all humanitarian agencies and personnel, particularly in Bunia and Ituri. I cannot miss the opportunity to make a personal comment although I know it is inappropriate. When we were in Bunia with the Security Council's mission to Central Africa, we were very struck by what we saw. When we speak of Bunia we always think of child soldiers, of the terrorized population, of the atrocities that have been committed, but less is said of the courage of certain people in Bunia.

I think it is right for us to pay tribute to Pétronille Vaweka, mother of five and President of the Special

Interim Assembly. We should pay tribute to her courage and dedication in very difficult circumstances.

Let me conclude by saying that it is vital for the draft resolution authorizing a new mandate for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to be finished expeditiously, to give it a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which is essential to protect civilian populations and military personnel that are subject to danger and threat.

The Security Council must, in the most affected areas, ensure that it acts as a bridge with the multinational force now in Bunia. My delegation will join in supporting that resolution. We would support the idea of including an arms embargo and we stress the need for a regional conference that would make it possible to bring together not only what is being done in the Congo, but all the work that is taking place in the region, and to develop a strategy for the economic and social development of this part of Africa.

I cannot conclude without paying particular tribute to the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Namanga Ngongi, for his valuable and devoted contribution to the peace process. Perhaps, for a delegation which only recently joined the Council, I might thank him for his kindness and patience towards some of us, on some occasions. I hope he will have every future success in his personal and professional life.

Lastly, I would like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Swing as his replacement and we wish him every success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me first to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his presence at the beginning of this meeting devoted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For the Congolese people who are following our discussion, his presence is a reassuring testimony to his personal commitment, and the commitment of the United Nations, to the establishment of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Like earlier speakers, I wish to welcome in our midst today Mr. Javier Solana, the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. His detailed and instructive statement enabled us to come to further conclusions deriving from his recent visit to the Great Lakes region, conclusions which can serve as guidelines and signposts for the future work of the Council.

I wish also to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi for their briefings on current developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There is no question that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a challenge to us all, to the international community, to Africa, and to the Congolese themselves. The Congolese people want peace, development and to benefit from their vast natural resources. Sadly, since independence, the history of the Congo has been marked by situations and crises which have constantly undermined this profound hope.

All the major actors on the political scene in the country consequently have the pressing task of realizing and living up to the hopes placed in them by their compatriots who are caught up in a whirlwind of violence, plunged into lassitude and gripped by unspeakable poverty.

It is now incumbent upon them to choose, the paths of dialogue and consultation rather than the language of weapons, which has already proven its limitations.

From this point of view, my delegation welcomes the recent political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which became possible upon the signing, on 17 December 2002, in Pretoria, of the global and all-inclusive transition agreement and then, on 2 April 2003, in Sun City, the final act of the inter-Congolese political negotiations. The signing of these acts by the various parties to the conflict marked the advent of a new age for the Congolese people, an age conducive to sustainable economic and social development based on peace and stability.

With this purpose in mind, the promulgation of the transitional constitution on 7 April 2003, the signing by the Congolese parties of the Memorandum on the army and security on 29 June 2003, and the establishment of the Government of National Unity and transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on

30 June 2003, are, without question, significant milestones in achieving these objectives.

We welcome the setting up of the Government of National Unity and transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in particular, the swearing-in yesterday, 17 July 2003, in Kinshasa, of the four vice presidents: Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Jean-Pierre Bemba, Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma and Azarius Ruberwa.

I take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to Amos Ngongi Namanga, who has brought devotion, skill and personal commitment to the cause of peace in that fraternal country and has thus made a significant contribution to the advent of this decisive stage in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We note with particular satisfaction that the swearing in of the four vice presidents took place in the presence of the President, in Kinshasa, and to the acclaim of the Congolese people, who were relieved and reassured by this development.

The fact that certain members of the Government have still not been sworn in, is an indication of the volatility and mistrust that still mark the political climate in Congo.

Mr. Solana has already spoken to us of the state of ambiguity deliberately maintained by certain factions. We are convinced this is the last manifestation of that situation and is only an isolated incident, because we are aware of the patriotism of our Congolese brothers. We know that the parties taking part in the Government of National Unity and transition clearly grasp the historic importance of the process in which they are engaged.

For its part, the international community, while lending its full support to this process, is monitoring the Congolese parties vigilantly. In that connection, Cameroon would like to commend the European Union, and France in particular, for the quality and effectiveness of their efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in recent weeks.

Operation Artemis, which was authorized by resolution 1484 (2003), has made it possible for Bunia and the district of Ituri to be liberated from their nightmare to once again become liveable places. Evidence of that is provided by the return of a significant number of refugees — to date numbering over 8,000 — who had fled the fighting.

The deployment of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force is a clear example of what the international community can and should do to help contain a conflict and to limit its humanitarian consequences as well as all types of violations of human rights. It is now important that the handover with the Force, set to take place on 1 September, be carried out in a diligent and orderly manner, so that the advances made by Operation Artemis in the area of security can be sustained. In that connection, the arrival early this week of the first Bangladeshi elements of the Ituri brigade is a positive sign that gives us cause to hope that there will not be a security vacuum in Ituri.

As Mr. Solana stressed earlier, the force that will take over from Operation Artemis must be given a robust mandate so that it can act as effectively as possible in emergency situations on the ground. In addition, such a mandate would have the advantage of being a deterrent in itself. The Secretary-General had suggested that option to the members of the Council. My country supported that option straightaway — and with good reason. Cameroon has always advocated establishing the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) under Chapter VII of the Charter. We welcome the fact that consensus in the Council has finally emerged in that regard. That will make it possible for MONUC to effectively play the role expected of it by the Congolese people.

The deployment of MONUC under a strengthened mandate will, among other things, make it possible to effectively address the peace process in Ituri, the Kivu provinces and Kinshasa. In Ituri in particular there is an urgent need to support the Interim Administration, which is experiencing difficulties in enforcing its authority. MONUC will be able to support it by, among other things, by strengthening police capacities. In North and South Kivu, MONUC will need to monitor, and work hand in hand with, the verification mission established following the signing on 19 June at Bujumbura of the Act of Engagement for the Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Kisangani/Mouvement de libération (RCD-K/ML) and RCD-Goma, and

following the meeting that took place between those parties at Beni on 26 June.

It appears that consensus is also emerging in the Council concerning the establishment of an arms embargo on the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. MONUC will also be called upon to implement that measure.

It must be acknowledged that the efforts of the Congolese people and the international community to reach political consensus and to restore security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be successful only when neighbouring States actively and unreservedly commit themselves to peace in that country, as well as in the Great Lakes region in general. With respect to the behaviour expected of those States, it is all of Africa that is involved. Accordingly, we urge them to fully respect the principles of international law set out in the Charter of the United Nations. We also call upon them to exert their influence upon the Congolese movements close to them so that the latter will continue to be positively engaged in the transition process that has now begun.

In a 1996 joint communiqué signed by the then Secretary-General, President Paul Biya of Cameroon called for the convening of a conference on the Great Lakes region aimed at finding a solution to the crisis that was then beginning. We continue to believe that the holding of such a conference would greatly contribute to improving relations among those States and make possible the establishment of an environment conducive to trade and prosperity based on trust and solidarity.

Beyond peace lies development. The European Union has led the way in the area of development by providing the new transitional authorities financial assistance as part of a rehabilitation programme for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the United Nations initiative in Ituri aimed at coordinating the activities of its agencies and their partners in the area of humanitarian assistance is part of the same pattern. This will enable all potential donors active in the region to develop their assistance through the Ituri Administration. We strongly encourage such contributions, and we appeal to the donor community to provide the new authorities in Kinshasa with increased support for their economic recovery efforts.

It cannot be said enough: in order to help the Congolese people to build upon the peace process and bring about national reconciliation, the international community must resolutely aid that people in the urgent and difficult task of rebuilding the country. That is why Cameroon proposes that development issues be decisively included in MONUC's mandate and that a post of assistant special representative responsible for such issues be created in the context of that Mission. It should be recalled that such a post exists in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. Making economic issues part of United Nations missions is so essential that the recently concluded Security Council mission to West Africa proposed establishing in Liberia the post of assistant special representative responsible for economic issues. Cameroon believes that this is not a matter of merely establishing a new post; it is an issue of involving MONUC in the necessary harmonization and coordination of development strategies. Bearing in mind the key role played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in that regard, as we understand it, the UNDP Resident Representative and Coordinator of the United Nations system might also hold the post of assistant special representative of the Secretary-General in charge of development issues.

I would like to conclude by recalling the conclusions of our public meeting held last week on respect for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like once again to reiterate the need for better respect of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo now that transition is on track. We cannot decry enough the massive violations of human rights that have taken place during the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and especially in Ituri. The issue of child soldiers should be given particular attention by both the transitional authorities and the international community in order that steps be taken to end that practice. More generally speaking, impunity must be confronted.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like first of all to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ngongi for their respective briefings.

The Security Council has held two public meetings this month on the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is clear evidence that the Security Council and the parties concerned attach great importance to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ngongi for the efforts he has made over the past two years at the head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to advance the peace process in that country.

In June I took part in the Council's mission to Central Africa and was a witness to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as to the poverty in Ituri and Bunia. As a result, I understand better the difficult circumstances in which Mr. Ngongi has been working and the contributions he has made to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I wish also to express my congratulations to Mr. Ngongi, because, as he was leaving, the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was established. I believe that this represents the best possible culmination of his two years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish him every success in his new capacity.

I wish also to express my appreciation to the European Union-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force for its efforts to stabilize the situation in Bunia.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been an ongoing source of concern for China. We are pleased to note that in the past several months significant progress has been made in the peace process in that country. In early April, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the parties concerned reached agreement on transitional arrangements. President Kabila was later sworn in as the head of the Transitional Government. On 30 June the Transitional Government was formally established, and yesterday four Vice-Presidents were sworn in.

All of these events are testimony to the fact that the various parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have gradually moved onto the path of political reconciliation, peace and national unity. We have always believed that the fundamental resolution of the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo depends on the efforts of the Congolese people themselves. We sincerely hope that the various parties in that country will proceed on the basis of the long-term and fundamental interests of the people and that they will seek common ground while putting aside their differences and working in a spirit of national reconciliation and mutual understanding. We hope that they will implement the agreements in good faith so as to promote the peace process.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has a vast territory and a wealth of natural resources. We sincerely hope that the various parties in that country will put aside past differences and work jointly, in a harmonious and cooperative manner, to bring the Democratic Republic of the Congo into a new era of peace, stability, prosperity and development.

The peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is at a crucial stage. The international community must increase its political, economic and financial contributions to it so that the Transitional Government can receive the necessary support.

China supports the idea that, as a result of the latest development, the mandate and size of MONUC should be adjusted. We support the adoption by the Council of a draft resolution on this issue at an early date. We hope that an expanded and modified MONUC will make further positive contributions to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the recently concluded second summit of the African Union, the African States reached a broad consensus on the integration of the African Union and the prevention and settlement of regional conflicts in Africa. They also put forward many practical measures. These will help to create a sound external environment for the settlement of conflict in Africa, including that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are convinced that, with the strong support of the international community and joint efforts on the part of the African countries and peoples, conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Africa at large will be resolved fully and at an early date. The Chinese Government has always fully promoted the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have contributed military observers, military engineers and medical teams to MONUC, and we have also participated in the international committee in support of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish to reiterate here that China, will, as always, work with all the parties concerned to play a constructive role in the political resolution of the issue of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for

having convened this meeting to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are pleased to express to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, our gratitude for his briefing, in which he contributed very important information concerning recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to extend to Mr. Ngongi, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our deepest appreciation for the efforts over the past two years to bring about peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to associate myself with the words of gratitude that you, Mr. President, expressed on behalf of the Council for the success that he has achieved.

We are especially pleased to welcome the presence of Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General and High Representative for Common Policy and Security Policy of the European Union, and we would like to express to the European Union and to him, personally, our gratitude for the efforts made to bring about peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other important areas of the world.

Little time elapsed between visits of the Security Council mission to Central Africa and of Mr. Solana to the same region. The views expressed earlier by Mr. Solana with regard to achieving a final settlement of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were very similar to the Security Council mission's conclusions. The intervention of the European Force in order to put an end to the killings in Bunia represents a new stage in promoting the pacification of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to express our gratitude in particular for the role of France in this area.

We should not forget the efforts made by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and the Uruguayan contingent in particular, in taking up important responsibilities at a very difficult period. We wish the Bangladesh contingent, whose main forces have begun to reach Ituri, every success in undertaking its responsibilities.

Syria agrees with the Security Council's proposals and recommendations to strengthen MONUC. We support the draft resolution prepared by the Council, and look forward to adopting it as soon as possible so that a modified, strengthened MONUC can continue its work in support of the peace process and prevent it from being reversed and put an end to the actions of those factions that are trying to kill innocent children or use them as soldiers — a matter that is not admissible under international humanitarian law. Along with other members of the Council, we reaffirm that those who have perpetrated massacres and violated humanitarian laws will be punished.

The Syrian delegation welcomes the formation of a Transitional Government of national unity, which will lead the country to democratic elections, put an end to the conflict and set the country on the road to peace and development, for the benefit of a people who have so greatly suffered. We hope that the National Observatory for Human Rights and the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission will begin their work as soon as possible to unify the position of the entire Congolese people in order to preserve the welfare of the country.

The Security Council has on previous occasions underlined the positive and decisive role that countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo can play in promoting the peace process and ensuring its success; Syria reaffirms that role.

In his statement on behalf of the European Union, Mr. Solano expressed a number of views and criteria that would ensure an end to massacres and war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He indicated several responsibilities to be shouldered by the European Union to promote national reconciliation and development in that country. Syria welcomes all the steps that the European Union will undertake or has already undertaken. I thank the European Union for its interest and its continuous follow-up of the situation in that country.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is passing through a historic stage, moving from violence and conflict to peace and security, from destruction and chaos to reconstruction, justice and respect for human rights. We are fully confident that the international community and the United Nations, including the Security Council, will support the people of that country in the final stage of their journey towards a brighter future.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this very important meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We

are grateful to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing. Like others, I wish to thank Mr. Ngongi for his presence here and for his briefing. I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for his recent role as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; we wish him well in the future. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. William Swing as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It is a pleasure to welcome Mr. Javier Solana to the Chamber. We thank him for his briefing on his recent visit to the region. We welcome the commitment of the European Union to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been long and bloody. It has claimed the lives of an estimated 3 million people. Millions have been rendered homeless and destitute. That conflict has rightly been called the greatest tragedy of our times. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a complex one and is compounded by competing political domestic and foreign agendas, inter-ethnic rivalry and hatred and the rampant and illegal exploitation of the rich natural resources of that large and strategic country. While the war has not produced any clear victors, millions of innocent civilians in the Congo have clearly become its victims. It is they who have suffered and continue to suffer as long as the conflict continues.

This month we witnessed the first real sign of hope with the inauguration of the Transitional Government of national unity. We hope that this is the culmination of a long and painstaking process of negotiations. It is, indeed, a bold step taken by all those who have chosen to participate in it, and we hope that all will participate in it.

Pakistan hopes that the formation of this Government will not only open the way to real political reform in the country but also bring to an end the conflict and fighting that has ravaged the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is now the responsibility of those who have agreed to share power to do their utmost to end the fighting and to peacefully resolve the issues which underlie the conflict.

In addition to making peace at the national level, there is need to support peace at the local level, especially through the Ituri Pacification Commission, and to support the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and, where appropriate, resettlement or repatriation of combatants in the provinces of North and South Kivu. It is necessary to support those peace initiatives through the provision of appropriate security. The presence of a robust peacekeeping force is necessary to create the political space for the peace process to take root and sustain itself. We welcome the deployment in Bunia of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force under French leadership. That temporary arrangement should be replaced with a more sustainable force, and in good time. My delegation supports the expansion of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to a ceiling of 10,800 troops, Chapter VII cover for Ituri and, if required, for the Kivus, and the presence of a brigade-size force in Ituri, with a clear, realistic and robust mandate. We support the draft resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is close to finalization, which includes all those elements.

The expanded presence of MONUC must be accompanied by a strong message to the warring factions and those who back them that further hostilities, which undermine the peace process, will no longer be tolerated. In that regard, my delegation supports the imposition of an arms embargo on all the warring parties. However, in doing so, we urge the Council to make this embargo credible, effective and implementable. If we do not do so, the very unworkability of the arms embargo will undermine the Council's credibility in the future. An appropriate mechanism, therefore, should be set up to monitor and implement such an arms embargo.

In making the arms embargo more effective, the Council must consider ways and means to track the illegal exploitation of resources to the sources of the funds, as well as to the points where those resources and funds are converted into arms. It is at those source points that the embargo should be designed to be most effective. The Pakistan delegation will revert to this point in the near future.

For durable peace, the countries in the region must support the peace process and refrain from contributing in any way to the continuation of hostilities. Pakistan fully supports the convening of a regional conference to promote peace, security and development. We also support calls for the conclusion of agreements on good-neighbourly relations between

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its various neighbours. It goes without saying that peace in the region would immeasurably help peace in the country. Improvement in socio-economic conditions through, inter alia, international assistance, would help considerably to establish peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The improvement of socio-economic conditions is also essential for sustainable peace there and in the region.

Finally, the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an integral, not a subsidiary or auxiliary, part of the conflict. The humanitarian plight of the common people in the war zones of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is truly heart-rending. They have suffered previously. Their suffering is a blot on the collective conscience of humanity. These crimes bring to mind the telling remark of Joseph Conrad in his memorable novel set in the Congo 100 years ago, *The Heart of Darkness*. He wrote: "The belief in a supernatural source of evil is not necessary; men alone are quite capable of every wickedness."

The culture of impunity, which has prevailed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo thus far, must come to an end. There can be no genuine peace without justice. The crimes committed must be punished. That should be done either through existing mechanisms or through specially created mechanisms, as in Rwanda. Pakistan remains ready — both in its capacity as a member of the Council and as a major contributor of United Nations peacekeeping forces — to support all possible efforts on the part of the United Nations and the international community to restore peace and justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to wish a warm welcome to Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, at the Council table. As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully associates itself with his statement. On a more personal note, I should like to say that today, it is even more of a pleasure than usual to associate myself with a common statement of the European Union, because, among other things, the sending of the multinational Force to Bunia is one of the European Union's most courageous actions with regard to foreign policy beyond the European continent.

In Mr. Solana's comments, I noted a genuine pride; I believe that it is very well founded. This action was obviously made possible, above all, by the extremely courageous decision of the French authorities. I must thank France for what it has done in Bunia. I participated in the Security Council mission to Bunia, and I must say that what has been accomplished by General Tonier, the officers of his staff, his soldiers and the representatives of the other countries participating in the Force — there are also non-European countries — deserves not only to be welcomed but also to be highlighted, since this is a decision that is fully in keeping with European and global public opinion regarding the intolerable horrors that took place in Ituri. I believe that it is a good example of the sometimes positive aspects of globalization, because public opinion can take the lead, and influence decision makers fairly rapidly, as is the case here. I believe that the decision on Bunia also made it possible for the political process in the Congo to make important progress.

If today we are celebrating the establishment of the national transitional Government in Kinshasa, it is because of the fact that the international community — particularly by sending the contingent to Bunia — has made it clear, first of all to the Congolese themselves, but also to the countries of the region, that its commitment to the Congo is for the long term and is very strong. I believe that the Security Council is fully playing its role here and should continue to do so in the future.

From that perspective, the draft resolution elaborated by the Security Council for a strengthened and extended mandate for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is a very positive and important development that Bulgaria has supported. We hope that the draft resolution is adopted as quickly as possible. In particular, we welcome the fact that it provides for the imposition of an arms embargo on the eastern part of the Congo. We also believe that a monitoring mechanism should eventually be established and that sanctions should be provided for those who violate the embargo.

I shall not speak at length about what the transitional Government should do. The task that faces it is immense. I should like to say only that one of the most important tasks is undoubtedly the organization of

free and transparent elections at all levels and throughout the country's territory.

But I should like to dwell on an issue that, I believe, is of concern today to all speakers around this table: the issue of impunity. Bulgaria has always favoured respect for the principle of responsibility for actions committed, whether in the African Great Lakes region, in Sierra Leone, in Timor-Leste or, obviously, in the Balkans. It is fundamental for the future, not only of the Congo itself, but also of the rest of Africa, that the international community do everything possible to ensure that that principle is respected. Unfortunately, we do not forget that the Congolese conflict, because of its length, the ferocity of the warlords and the size of the country itself, has caused violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law to take on proportions that challenge the universal conscience and cannot be ignored.

Clearly, a question arises, as in so many situations of this type: how do we express the international community's support to the Congolese people along with the imperative need for the effective pursuit of the principle of non-impunity? The answers are not obvious or easy, but one thing is sure: the Security Council must be provided with the means — including the legal means — to implement that principle. From that perspective, the statements made by Mr. Moreno Ocampo, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, are very encouraging, and Bulgaria welcomes them.

I would like to conclude my comments by expressing Bulgaria's gratitude to Mr. Ngongi, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We are grateful to him for the outstanding work he has done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for his energy and dedication in extremely difficult circumstances. We would also like to welcome Ambassador Swing, who is making his diplomatic talent available to the United Nations. We would also like to thank the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its professionalism in its management of the Congolese issue, which is one of the most difficult issues facing it. We would also like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno personally for his own involvement in this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Spain.

We thank Mr. Guéhenno, Mr. Ngongi and Mr. Solana for their briefings. We believe that the peace process is at a crucial stage, and we welcome the fact that the timetable deadlines for the entry into force of the Government and the establishment of transitional institutions have been met.

The swearing-in of the four Vice-Presidents means that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has entered a new phase and, therefore, we urge the Transitional Government to work resolutely for national reconciliation.

Spain welcomes the efforts made by the outgoing Government of Joseph Kabila to achieve a compromise formula to appoint the new leader of the national armed forces. We believe that the current attitudes of the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda with regard to deterring their groups in the country from further violence is the right path in order to make progress in the peace process. In that connection, we value greatly the visit of the High Representative, Mr. Javier Solana, to the region.

At the same time, the situation in the eastern part is still cause for concern. Following the commendable activities of the Uruguayan contingent, we welcome the fact that the deployment of the Artemis Operation has been concluded, that the process of demilitarizing Bunia has begun, and that the objectives entrusted to the European Union (EU) to stabilize the political and humanitarian situation are being achieved despite conditions that are dangerous to the troops involved.

The steps taken for the operation to be taken over by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) have also been positive. That takeover will have to be carried out seamlessly in order to avoid a security vacuum. On the other hand, we must make all efforts to strengthen the political settlement to the conflict in Ituri and to support the expeditious establishment of the interim administration in Ituri.

I shall now resume my function as President of the Council.

I call on the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow us, at the outset, to thank you, Mr. President, for having kindly convened this important meeting of the Security Council on the

situation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We wish to welcome Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (EU), and to express to him our appreciation for his comprehensive statement made following his visit to the region. We have also followed with great interest the contributions to today's discussions of Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Ngongi, who have accurately described the reality in the field.

Before continuing with my statement, allow me to tell the Secretary-General that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will have the opportunity in due course to thank him for his appointment of Ambassador William Lacey Swing his Special Representative to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For us, the Congolese, Ambassador Swing is a well-known individual who needs no special introduction.

Today we would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to our brother, Amos Namanga Ngongi of Cameroon, for his outstanding work. Under his mandate, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has worked for the cause of peace and the restoration of dignity for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has concluded phase II of its operations and has contributed, as was well emphasized by the Secretary-General, to the recent progress made in the peace process, which has entered a new phase, particularly with the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity and the upcoming establishment of other republican and public institutions provided by the All-Inclusive Agreement on The Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to ask Mr. Amos Ngongi to continue to turn his thoughts towards the people of the Congo, whom he has adopted and sustained during the two years of his mandate. We wish him every success in his new post.

Hope has emerged in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but concerns still exist. The transitional period, which is to conclude with free and transparent elections, will not be easy. It should be supported, because otherwise the result might be the collapse of the entire structure that the Security Council has patiently constructed over the years in partnership with the Congo, the countries of the region and interested countries. The efforts of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force, which has succeeded in stabilizing the security and humanitarian situation in Bunia and the surrounding territory, would be futile if the Bangladesh contingent, which has begun its deployment, did not have, as we reiterated this morning, an adequate mandate and rules of engagement, as well as an overall strategy aimed at restoring lasting peace in the Ituri district.

It is correct that the return to normality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo depends primarily on the Congolese themselves, whose leaders must demonstrate self-sacrifice and patriotism. To that end, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Major General Joseph Kabila, has provided full assurance that difficulties will be overcome and that the window of opportunity open for peace will not be closed, so that the transition can continue to make unimpeded progress.

The international community, particularly the Security Council, must therefore build on this transition period. The Council must provide positive follow-up to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his second special report on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), particularly by adapting the latter's mandate to allow it not only to build on the achievements of the Multinational Force, but to transform itself into a vast multidisciplinary operation for peacekeeping operating throughout the entire national territory.

The international community must continue to provide assistance to the Transitional Government of National Unity, particularly in implementing the Transitional Constitution, the reform of the national army and the police, the preparation and holding of elections and the furthering of good governance and development in order to enable the Congo population to specifically benefit from the peace dividend.

The international community must also tackle factors of instability; namely, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the illegal arms trafficking in the region that fuels the war of aggression. These activities must be terminated.

Regarding disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programmes, these must be rethought and resolutely applied, on one hand, to all Congolese nationals beyond the law and, on the other hand, to all foreigners operating within armed groups, regardless of their country of origin. The peace process

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be concluded only if the democratic transition processes under way in the other countries of the Great Lakes region also progress. In that same vein, there is a need to follow very closely the elections which will be held in a few weeks in Rwanda. It is our most ardent hope that the new leadership Rwanda will acquire following these elections, which we hope will be free and democratic, will have the political courage to work to achieve the necessary national harmony in that country in order to contribute fully and positively to the stabilization of the Great Lakes region.

The restoration of relations of confidence is therefore an absolute necessity. In Kinshasa we noted that Mr. Javier Solana, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, has supported the establishment of an institution for collective security in the Great Lakes region, which actually had existed recently.

It would therefore be advantageous to revisit the idea of the now-defunct Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL). Its lofty objectives were, first, to ensure the security of States and their peoples, so that nothing would disrupt order and tranquillity; secondly, to conceptualize, define and promote the establishment and development of economic activities based upon shared interests; and finally, to advance and intensify trade relations and the movement of individuals and goods.

We reiterate that for historical reasons, the core of the CEPGL should be made up of former Belgian colonies. However, there would be nothing to prevent the new CEPGL from being expanded to other countries such as Uganda and Tanzania, whose interests are inextricably linked to those of the countries of the Great Lakes region.

Efforts to establish such an institution should not overshadow the fact that the countries of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region all have subscribed to the idea of discussing the future of their relations through an international conference on peace, stability, security and development, which they all fervently desire.

Allow us, before we conclude, to quickly touch on some issues which seem to us of the greatest importance.

Regarding human rights, I take this opportunity to try to provide at least a few elements in answer to the question raised by the representatives of the Russian Federation and of the United Kingdom. It is clearly imperative that justice be provided for the Congolese people who have been the victims of numerous atrocities — atrocities that still continue within the national territory of the country.

As the head of State, Major-General Joseph Kabila, has stated, our determination to unify the country by overcoming artificial differences cannot, however, sidestep justice, which will promote a lasting reconciliation. Justice — independent and equal for all — must play its full role in ending, once and for all, impunity, which continues to incite anti-social behaviour, and must also provide for legal redress for the victims.

The urgent need to provide the Democratic Republic of the Congo with solid national institutions for the protection of human rights and with an adequate institutional framework in which criminals will be held responsible for their acts prompts us to request the support of the entire international community for the rapid establishment and early functioning of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Observatory for Human Rights, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We remain convinced that the question of impunity will be among the priorities of the Transitional Government of National Unity, whose first meeting is planned for tomorrow, Saturday, 19 July 2003, and which in early August will present its programme of work before the transitional parliament.

With regard to the humanitarian situation in the areas affected by conflict, the lack of access to populations in need and the lack of security created by the activities of the parties to the conflicts has always been the main obstacle to large-scale humanitarian activity.

Now that the various parties to the conflict are all working for the reunification of the country within the Transitional Government of National Unity, there is an imperative need for all means to be implemented to ensure unimpeded access to those areas which were previously inaccessible, and to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian assistance to those areas in need.

As for the specific situation of Ituri, we support and encourage the implementation of the strategy for Ituri — developed by MONUC and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the humanitarian agencies — in order to guide and coordinate the activities of the United Nations agencies and their partners by concentrating, first of all, on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Bunia.

Finally, regarding the protection of children, the images of Bunia displayed by the media are odious. Children represent a category of vulnerable individuals, and their presence in fighting forces is of the greatest concern to us, as is demonstrated by the legal framework now in effect.

The Democratic Republic of Congo commits itself to strictly implementing the provisions of Law Decree No. 066 of 9 June 2000, regarding the demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable groups. That law lays down an unequivocal and strict ban on the recruitment of children and reflects the will and determination of the Government to ensure harmonization between the Congolese legal system and the international legal system concerning human rights.

The national programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers must be accelerated, given the large number of child soldiers who remain on the front lines and in military camps throughout the national territory. We call on the international community to support this programme.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo would like to express its deep gratitude to the international community, in particular to the European Union and to France, which has been playing a leading role within the Multinational Force, for their unswerving commitment to peace in the Congo.

We also take advantage of this opportunity once again to reassure all of our partners, in particular our brothers from neighbouring countries, as to our keen desire to live in harmony with everyone in a spirit of tolerance, solidarity and open cooperation.

The internal process of reconciliation and national harmony, as well as improved prospects for peace in the Great Lakes region, allow us to envisage with much more equanimity the advent of a region of greater peace, security, justice and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I appeal to representatives who have yet to take the floor kindly to be as brief as possible. There are nine speakers left. If we proceed quickly, we may be able to finish this morning, as we had hoped. Otherwise we may have to suspend and return at 3.15 p.m. Once again I urge delegations who have yet to take the floor to be brief.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of South Africa, I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Maitland (South Africa): At the outset, I would like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July.

We would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, for his briefing. We also extend our gratitude to Mr. Javier Solana for his briefing on the European Union's efforts to support the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish further to convey South Africa's profound gratitude to Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for his dedicated leadership of the work of the United Nations in that country.

This meeting is indeed timely, as it coincides with important developments in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, South Africa congratulates the Congolese parties on their efforts to implement the Global and All-inclusive Agreement, and in particular on the establishment of the transitional institutions. We welcome the formation of the Transitional Government, which we view as a crucial first step towards achieving lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. South Africa is honoured to have been able to assist in that process, and it remains ready to continue to do so. We urge all stakeholders in the peace process to continue to observe and implement the agreements they have signed. There is no turning back. The strategy of talking peace and waging war at the same time must be abandoned.

Today's public meeting also coincides with the Council's ongoing discussions on strengthening and adjusting the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in the light of new

developments. Indeed, the grave security and humanitarian situation in Ituri province obliges the Security Council to give serious consideration to proposals to strengthen MONUC's military presence in that part of the country. In addition to strengthening the numbers and capabilities of MONUC's forces, South Africa believes that the operation should be equipped with a Chapter VII mandate so that it can effectively carry out the tasks assigned to it. In that regard, the protection of civilians under imminent threat of armed attack should receive special emphasis.

As the report of the Council's recent mission to Central Africa (S/2003/653) correctly points out, the departure of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force, which was dispatched under Chapter VII of the Charter, and the imminent deployment of MONUC's second task force to Ituri raise important questions with respect to the congruence of their two mandates. We hope that the Security Council will take a decision on this matter as soon as possible, in order to allow potential troop-contributing countries sufficient time to prepare their forces for the tasks at hand.

While promoting a more robust mandate for MONUC, we would be remiss not to stress the responsibility of all Congolese stakeholders to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is essential to creating an environment conducive to the establishment of lasting peace and reconciliation.

We concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that there is a need to examine the role of MONUC and other United Nations system partners in the light of the new political developments. South Africa therefore welcomes the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's second special report (S/2003/566), which proposes a more comprehensive approach to support the transitional phase in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Of particular importance to South Africa is the need to support the security arrangements for the Transitional Government in Kinshasa, as well as the work of the Ituri interim administration. The new political developments afford all stakeholders the opportunity to rejuvenate the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate South Africa's commitment to stay the course with the Congolese people as they work to implement all agreements. Accordingly, our engagement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not end with the signing of the Final Act at Sun City. The recent success in the peace process provides real opportunities to commence the urgent task of economic reconstruction in the country. The support of the international community in that task is of critical importance. South Africa stands ready to make its contribution to the efforts of the Congolese people to achieve peace and prosperity in their country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh congratulates you most warmly, Mr. President, on your skilful conduct of the presidency of the Council. Plaudits are also owed to Ambassador Sergey Lavrov for Russia's astute leadership of this forum during the month of June. The presence here today of Mr. Javier Solana, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi lends special significance to these proceedings. I thank them for their important briefings. We also congratulate Ambassador Swing on his appointment, and we wish him every success.

The recent waves of violence in eastern Congo have deeply shocked the international community. Despite the Council's many calls, the fragile peace continues to remain threatened. The conflict, apart from wreaking havoc in the form of death and destruction, has displaced an enormous number of people from their homes. An acute humanitarian crisis has thereby been created. The gross violations of human rights that have been perpetrated there with impunity are odious. They undermine all the universal values that we hold so dear. Bangladesh, along with others, is profoundly concerned.

The Council is to be commended for its timely action in authorizing the Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF). France deserves the highest praise for having led it so effectively. We applaud the European Union for its active participation. Operation Artemis has been able to restore a modicum of calm.

Certain positive political developments to which Mr. Ngongi has referred point to an emerging silver lining. They include the formation of the Transitional

Government and the national army. We are heartened by those measures and we reiterate our call on all Congolese parties to work together with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and others. That is essential to bringing peace and stability to that troubled land.

Bangladesh welcomes the important contribution made by the United States to the trust fund for the Ituri interim administration.

We are pleased that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Bunia in particular, as a very deserving case in the international humanitarian appeal for refugees in Africa. We commend MONUC for its strategy paper on Bunia and Ituri, which provides a phased timeline to address the range of future challenges in that region.

Bangladesh, whose birth was preceded by a protracted war, is today a country in the midst of a most positive transformation. A democratic polity dedicated to development and a vibrant civil society have spawned many innovative ideas, raising vast numbers of the populace out of poverty every year. We are anxious to share our experiences with societies of comparable milieu. We believe that, just as we have done, Africa has the potential, with some external help, to lift itself up by its own bootstraps. But development requires that conflicts must first cease.

Bangladesh is therefore prepared to contribute, to the best of its modest capability, to that process in Africa, which includes the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To that end, we have committed one mechanized infantry battalion of 1,050 troops to MONUC's second task force. The deployment is well under way. In this connection, I must pay tribute to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and his team for the excellent cooperation and coordination between his Department and us, which have rendered this intricate procedure so smooth. The Bangladesh troops will relieve the IEMF by 1 September, as the Council has stipulated. We are fully aware that the military threat assessment is higher in that area of operation than in most others we have faced. Nonetheless, the Bangladesh army has a rich tradition that dates back long into history. We are confident of delivering in the Congo. Indeed, if required, we are prepared to make further contributions in terms of men and material.

It is our hope, though, that the Council will act promptly in consonance with the Secretary-General's recommendations to raise troop ceilings under MONUC and to provide a more robust mandate. These sentiments have rightly found resonance in many statements made here today. It is also important that the second task force, in its full-strength enhanced brigade formation, be in place on the ground as soon as possible. That failing, there could be a security vacuum following the departure of the IEMF. That is something no one wants; it cannot, and must not, be allowed to occur.

We are encouraged by the contents of the draft resolution at hand. In our view, its adoption will make a tremendous difference in helping to stabilize the situation in Bunia and beyond.

The tragedy in the Congo has gone on for far too long. It must be brought to a close. The Congo must be put back on the track of peace and progress as soon as possible. The international community has a responsibility in that regard. Our commitment to universal values demands that it be discharged.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): This meeting is taking place at a sensitive stage in the Council's efforts to put an end to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There can be no doubt that the Security Council has done a great deal to analyse the various aspects of the conflict. It has had recourse to a number of mechanisms to deal with this very complex issue. Events and developments on the ground, however, mean that we must continue to pursue our efforts, which will require greater political and material commitment. Further courageous and difficult decisions will also be necessary.

We support the priority assigned by the Security Council and the Secretary-General to backing and encouraging the peace process, which is beginning to bear fruit after a long period of waiting. All of the internal political parties must commit themselves to both the letter and the spirit of the Lusaka accord and the Luanda, Sun City and Bujumbura agreements. The activities of the Transitional Government of National Unity must be supported. The Government must be

able gradually to expand its authority throughout the territory.

Significant and difficult challenges, however, remain to be overcome. The Security Council must take decisive measures and adopt policies that move the political process forward. Half measures must be avoided. Resources must be made available, and an appropriate mandate adopted for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) so that it can properly discharge its mission in a number of areas.

First, support must be provided for the political process, including a guarantee of the commitment of all political parties to the meetings and other activities of the Transitional Government. Secondly, the protection of civilians and property must be assured and access to displaced persons and refugees guaranteed for international rescue organizations. Thirdly, the implementation of ceasefire measures and of steps to prevent arms supplies to the various military factions must be monitored. Fourthly, the monitoring and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into civilian life must take place. Fifthly, the activities of United Nations programmes and bodies in the area of social development, institutional capacity-building and human rights protection must be coordinated. Sixthly, capacity must be strengthened for training national security institutions to discharge their functions to protect the internal and external boundaries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the national resources of the country.

We reaffirm the critical role that is being played by the group of experts that is studying the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo within the framework of support for the political operation under way. We are all well aware of the close relationship between the illegal exploitation of resources, arms flows and the continuation of the fighting in the east and north-east of the country. Thus the establishment of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend, to a significant extent, on the determination of the international community to put an end to the illegal economic activities taking place there.

It is well known that the current conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is having negative regional repercussions for the entire Great Lakes region. The balance of forces in the region plays an important role in that bloody conflict. We believe, therefore, that the establishment of peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend first and foremost on taking into account the political, security and economic needs of the States of the Great Lakes region as a whole, as well as on creating a common denominator of shared interests based on good-neighbourliness and respect for the sovereignty of each State over its own territory.

In that context, the holding of an international conference on the establishment of peace in the Great Lakes region takes on increasing importance. That will require serious preparatory work under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, with the participation of all the forces involved, both international and regional. That conference must study the concept of peace-building in a comprehensive manner, including development, political and security issues, and accept the idea that peace is indivisible.

We welcome the courageous initiative of the European Union to create the International Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia, which has allowed for the stabilization of the situation in that city — a city that has suffered from bloody conflict. In the context of that important decision, we welcome Mr. Javier Solana, who is here with us today.

As a country contributing troops to MONUC, Egypt would like to congratulate Mr. Ngongi for his outstanding leadership in dealing with the mandate and resources of MONUC. We are sure that MONUC, with the guidance of Mr. Swing, and given his experience and many contacts, will also make great progress on the basis of the new mandate with which the Council will soon provide the mission.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for having convened this open meeting to debate the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to thank Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Solana for their comprehensive statements this morning.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Brazil's firm support for the efforts undertaken by the

Secretary-General with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are confident that his new Special Representative, Ambassador William Swing, will continue to show the leadership that is crucial for the success of the peace process, as did his predecessor, Amos Namanga Ngongi.

Brazil cherishes its ties with Africa, forged through centuries of intertwined history. In this regard, Brazil is ready to offer its share of contributions to help the African people tackle their difficulties, some of which are very familiar to our own country. Appalled by the humanitarian situation in Bunia, the Brazilian Congress has authorized the deployment of two Air Force cargo planes, with their crews, to be used in the transportation of troops and humanitarian assistance from Entebbe to Bunia, under the coordination of the Multinational Force established by resolution 1484 (2003).

Current efforts made by the international community to bring immediate relief to the Congolese people and to re-establish control over the clashes taking place in Ituri will have to be followed up. We therefore commend the Council on its efforts to provide the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) with a more robust mandate before the mandate of the Multinational Force is due to end. A vacuum of authority in the region could harm the significant achievements made by the Ituri Interim Administration and threaten the activities of the recently established Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Brazil congratulates all the parties involved in the establishment of the Transitional Government and the recently promulgated Transitional Constitution. Those developments would not have happened without MONUC's support, which will remain crucial throughout the process leading to the holding of elections and the creation of a truly democratic Government in the near future. Democracy is the basis for sustainable peace. Brazil looks forward to the successful work of the Independent Electoral Commission and is ready to cooperate with it, drawing on our experience in organizing elections in areas of difficult access.

The agreements reached through the inter-Congolese dialogue are highly commendable. Brazil believes that the Secretary-General should be provided with all the resources required to maintain the current trend of positive results. We favour a temporary arms embargo for the region and the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring and inspection.

The cruelty of the crimes committed in Ituri and the Kivus shocks the human conscience. The observance of international humanitarian law is a condition for peace in the region. In that connection, MONUC should also be capable of providing a reasonably safe environment in which humanitarian agencies can operate.

For sustainable peace to be established, renewed efforts should be made to ensure that impunity for those responsible for atrocities and crimes against humanity does not prevail. It is our view that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be provided with all necessary support and security so that it can offer assistance and gather information on the ground. The recommendations put forward by Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan some 10 days ago before the Council deserve our full support. In particular, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations should be involved in providing psychological help to victims and witnesses of atrocities. It should not be overlooked that even some perpetrators of violence deserve assistance, as is the case with child soldiers. We also urge the international community to support the work of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Observatory for Human Rights, which are to be established under the All-Inclusive Agreement signed in December 2002.

To conclude, we would like to commend the Governments of the neighbouring countries for their support for the activities of the United Nations on the ground. Neighbouring countries should seize the opportunity offered by the success achieved in the inter-Congolese dialogue to consider negotiating international agreements to deal with the remaining concerns about security in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): The present state of affairs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the most critical situations that the international community has to address. Japan therefore welcomes this opportunity for non-members of the Security

Council to express their opinions on this very important subject.

The agreement forged as the result of long negotiations among the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other Congolese parties for the formation of the new Transitional Government of National Unity, followed by the announcement by President Joseph Kabila on 30 June designating the ministers of the new Government and yesterday's swearing-in of four vice-presidents, is a very important step in the peace process in that country. The Government of Japan welcomes such progress and commends the efforts made by the facilitators in that regard. It is our fervent hope that all Congolese parties concerned will cooperate fully in order to allow the Government to begin functioning as soon as possible, in accordance with the Transitional Constitution. The Japanese Government, for its part, is prepared to cooperate closely with the new Government and, in this connection, is considering the possibility of extending assistance in the area of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

My Government is convinced that it is a matter of great urgency to take measures to stabilize the situation and thereby avoid a humanitarian crisis in the eastern part of the country. We very much appreciate the activities undertaken by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and by the Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) dispatched under the leadership of the European Union under extremely difficult conditions. As the situation following the withdrawal of the IEMF this coming September is difficult to predict, it is important for the Security Council promptly to adopt a resolution authorizing the deployment of troops with an appropriate mandate in the Ituri region and thus ensure a smooth transition from the IEMF to the MONUC contingent. That will demonstrate to the parties concerned the strong resolve of the Council to advance the peace process. I would like to raise three issues that should be considered in addressing this matter.

First, given the seriousness of the situation in the area of Bunia and in order to advance the Ituri pacification process, we recognize that the MONUC contingent deployed in the region requires a sufficiently robust enforcement mandate, and we support the granting of such a mandate. At the same time, we believe that it is necessary to exercise caution. A strong enforcement mandate for activities such as providing security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter will, under circumstances in which certain parties are not participating in the ceasefire agreement or peace accord, risk changing the current practices of peacekeeping operations and plunging the troops into very complicated situations, in which they may be required to engage in combat as if they were parties to the conflict. Therefore, we should not easily confer such robust powers on other peacekeeping operations. Such a mandate should be given to peacekeepers only in exceptional cases in which the urgency of the situation makes it absolutely necessary and in which there are countries willing to contribute troops, as well as the clear prospect that the troops dispatched with such a mandate will contribute to the improvement of the situation. I would also like to stress that it would be inappropriate to formulate such an enforcement mandate in an ambiguous manner. It should be clearly defined by a Council resolution to show under what conditions and in which geographical areas it will be exercised, and the rules of engagement enabling the exercise of the mandate should be established accordingly.

Secondly, with respect to the size of the Mission, the Government of Japan recognizes the need for strengthening MONUC in order to address adequately the additional, urgent needs that have emerged in the eastern part of the country and to prevent the spreading of the crisis to other parts of the country. However, we consider it unrealistic to take the same approach to the entire territory as is being applied in the Ituri region. Peace cannot be consolidated by force through the foreign military presence of MONUC in a country as vast as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must stress that all parties concerned need to cooperate of their own volition in promoting the peace process.

Thirdly, with respect to the arms embargo proposed by the Secretary-General, Japan believes that it is important to ensure its effectiveness once it is imposed. From that point of view, we hope that the Security Council will carefully consider the introduction of the necessary measures, particularly the issue of how to monitor its implementation. In relation to the problem of small arms and light weapons, it was indicated during the Biennial Meeting on Small Arms last week that, based on the Programme of Action initiated in 2001, national focal points for this issue have been established in the Great Lakes region. Close

cooperation with those national contact points in the implementation of an arms embargo is essential. I also wish to take this opportunity to stress that the Council should consider taking effective measures to deal with the problem of the illicit exploitation of natural resources as well.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Swing, newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Japan hopes that MONUC will continue to function effectively. If we fail in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping operations will be seriously compromised. The international community must remain committed to devoting its utmost efforts to helping to solve the problem.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor before the Security Council since I took office in the Permanent Mission of Indonesia this month, please permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for July. We look forward to working with you for the rest of the month, and we wish you every success. I should also like to thank Special Representative Amos Ngongi and European Union High Representative Javier Solana for their briefings.

My delegation is pleased to align itself with the Security Council's commitment to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This meeting comes against the backdrop of the recent visit of the Council to that country in the continued quest for peace in the area — a tour that, I am happy to say, is in accord with the wishes of my delegation. In principle, there is no doubt that such a visit offers a tremendous opportunity for the members of the Council to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and the players, thereby contributing to the formulation of the best possible conflict-resolution strategies.

Domestically, it comes as a great relief to learn that the Transitional Government announced by President Joseph Kabila on 30 June 2003 has become a reality with the swearing-in of the Vice-Presidents. The new Government is a viable basis for unifying the country and for bringing into the centre all parties and elements relevant to the search for peace.

In addition, it is the hope of Indonesia that, with the agreement on the distribution of military command posts, the final obstacle in the path of the Transitional Government has been eliminated. In that connection, my delegation would like to highlight the involvement of an Indonesian contingent in the peace process, not only as a demonstration of the commitment of my Government to peace in the country, but also as a symbol of Indonesia's continued faith in United Nations peacekeeping and of its constitutional commitment to international peace.

I now turn to the question of violence and human rights violations. The situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — where both violence and allegations of violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law have become routine — has been of tremendous concern to the international community for several years. The picture of an area where violence and impunity reign and where security of life and of property is at a minimum cannot be reconciled with the conditions necessary for development.

It is in that connection that we return to the political structures now being set up in the country. The Transitional Government holds the key to the resolution of the crisis; in its hands rests the ability to reconcile this divided country and to return peace to the people. Given the fair distribution of posts to relevant parties in the traditional administration, there may now be full and representative national participation in the political process, leading to free and fair elections. The concept of an inter-Congolese dialogue has always been important in the search for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Transitional Government — in itself an exercise of the political expression of the entire nation — is truly positioned to organize the proper forum for such a dialogue.

Similarly, in view of the issues that have arisen in the course of this conflict, we share the view that the Security Council should establish a National Observatory for Human Rights and a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission without delay. Beyond the pursuit of justice, there is an equally critical reason why the work of those bodies is indispensable, and that is the vexing question of impunity. It is obvious that a part of the reason why there have continued to be such persistent violence and violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law is that there is no

dissuasion of any sort with regard to the actions of armed parties. That is a legal, philosophical and practical loophole that must not continue to exist. It is critical that anyone intent on committing human rights crimes recognize that there will be serious consequences for such crimes.

I cannot conclude these remarks without paying due tribute to the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) as an institution and to the men and women who make it work. Despite all the difficulties it has encountered, MONUC has been instrumental in the progress that has been made thus far by the United Nations in the search for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Mission is a demonstration of the potential of the United Nations in the search for international peace, a potential and a tool that the international community must continue to nurture and treasure.

My delegation is gratified at the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/337, on the prevention of armed conflict, which recognizes the important role that the United Nations should continue to play in the prevention of armed conflict by promoting conflict resolution and dispute settlement. Further, it encourages the continued strengthening of the process of the peaceful settlement of disputes and efforts to make it more effective.

While the support of the international community is vital in the situation unfolding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, what is even more important is the determination of the Congolese to overcome the obstacles to peace that have haunted their country for so many long years and have denied them the opportunity to turn the vast resources of their land towards development. The challenge before them is to demonstrate a genuine thirst for peace in their country, for there can be no commencing the building of development without the foundation of peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Philippines. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and we commend the Russian presidency for its excellent stewardship of the Council last month.

We also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting at a time when significant developments are under way in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — a conflict area that has claimed some 3 million lives. We note with particular interest the briefings of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Special Representative Mr. Amos Ngongi and European Union High Representative Mr. Javier Solana. We welcome Ambassador William Swing's appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We join the international community in welcoming the swearing-in yesterday of the four Vice-Presidents who constitute the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, it is a significant step to unify the Democratic Republic of the Congo during this critical stage. We wish all the Congolese parties success in their efforts to achieve genuine national reconciliation. We encourage them to maintain the 22-month time frame for the Transitional Government to usher in the establishment of an elected Government. We share the Congolese people's goal of holding credible and fair democratic elections.

My delegation notes that the formation of a Transitional Government was a swift response to the call of the recent Security Council mission to Central Africa, led by France, for the Congolese parties to implement without further delay the global and all-inclusive accord on the establishment of a Transitional Government. Indeed, Security Council missions to conflict areas — missions which engage in dialogue with the relevant parties involved in conflict — make an important and meaningful contribution to steps to resolve such conflict.

However, the formation of a Transitional Government is only a first step. Security in the Ituri region remains fragile. We commend France and the other countries that make up the International Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) in Bunia for immediately providing security in that area. It is thus of paramount importance that a security vacuum not emerge once the IEMF has completed its mandate by 1 September. In this regard, the proposal of the Secretary-General to strengthen MONUC deserves support. We note the considerable progress made in the negotiations on the draft resolution to address that concern. My delegation looks forward to the early

adoption of that draft resolution, under Chapter VII of the Charter.

We are fully aware that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is complex and difficult. However, it is not insurmountable. We agree with the conclusion of the recent Security Council mission to Central Africa that the time for war has passed and that the time has come to carry out the political agreements of the parties. It is now time to translate the commitments made in the peace agreements into reality. The strengthening of MONUC is only one of the measures to halt the fighting and the violence in the volatile areas. My delegation would like to endorse a number of initiatives — initiatives that have been repeatedly echoed but that have yet to be implemented — to create a long-term peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First, an international conference involving the countries in the Great Lakes region should be convened. My delegation notes the preparatory work that has been undertaken in this regard. This would be a step in the right direction, and it should be vigorously pursued. Secondly, an agreement on good-neighbourliness must be forged.

My delegation also notes the briefings given last week by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, with regard to the investigations made concerning specific incidents involving gross human rights violations. Every effort must be undertaken to bring the perpetrators of those acts to justice.

Finally, more concrete steps should be adopted to stop the pillaging of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's natural resources. We thus look forward to the Council's response to the recommendations of the Kassem Panel report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): Like previous speakers, I should like to welcome the presence here this morning of the Secretary-General. This is a sign of the determination of the United Nations to help to resolve conflict in the Great Lakes region and to achieve peace there.

I should like also to thank Mr. Guéhenno and Mr. Ngongi for their statements concerning recent developments and events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, in my view, were assessed positively.

I should like also to thank Mr. Solana for his initiative of travelling to the region to see for himself the magnitude of the crisis in Africa, which is evidence of the fresh impetus given by the international community, and the European Union in particular, to assist that region finally to overcome the crises afflicting it and the attendant untold suffering.

We are grateful to the President of the Council for having convened this important public meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is taking place at an important moment: the day after the establishment of the Government in keeping with the Lusaka accords and the inter-Congolese dialogue. We are also at this time prompted to reflect on the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that of the Great Lakes region as a whole.

The Government of Rwanda welcomes the establishment of an inclusive Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has become a reality with the return to Kinshasa of the primary leaders of the rebel movements — the Mouvement national de libération du Congo and the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD)-Goma — as well as the swearing-in of the four vice-presidents of the Republic, who were nominated within the framework of the establishment of the Transitional Government.

Throughout the Congolese crisis, the Government of Rwanda has consistently drawn the attention of the Council and of the international community to the need to establish an inclusive Government strong enough to re-establish authority on its territory and sufficiently responsible to ensure respect for the security of neighbouring States. This concern was once again emphasized by His Excellency President Paul Kagame during his meeting with the Security Council mission in Kigali last month.

The establishment of the Transitional Government is not an end in itself. My Government therefore hopes that it marks the beginning of a firm commitment to genuine peace and stability within the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in the region as a whole, and that it will provide a legitimate

means of rallying Congolese people of all convictions around a shared ideal of unity, justice and equality before the law in a country where exclusion in any form would be banned, with a view to rebuilding a prosperous Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government would like also to express the hope that the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will shoulder its responsibilities with regard to the various armed groups in its territory by promoting effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement programme, with respect for the accords previously signed in Lusaka and Pretoria.

My Government is committed to cooperating with the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to find answers to issues of security, sovereignty and peace in the region, in the interests of our respective countries and peoples.

My Government reiterates its full cooperation with MONUC and hopes that the Mission will be strengthened in a manner that is commensurate with its important task.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*) The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and on the outstanding manner in which you have been conducting the business of the Council.

I appreciate the fact that you have convened this timely public debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also appreciate the contribution of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ngongi, to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I welcome the appointment of Mr. William Swing as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and wish him success in his work.

Let me also express our appreciation to Mr. Javier Solana for having briefed us on the initiative taken by the European Union in the search for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let me also express my appreciation to Mr. Guéhenno for the briefing he gave this morning.

Rich in natural resources and ethnic diversity, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has long remained a hotbed of conflict in Africa. Neighbouring countries have found their interests intersecting with each other and often interfere in the internal affairs of that country. Rival groups have fought among themselves and with the Government forces. The multi-ethnic eastern region of Ituri has experienced the worst form of violence of late.

The violence has taken a huge toll. Since 1999 alone, more than 60,000 people have lost their lives, 100,000 have fled their country as refugees and nearly 600,000 have been displaced. People's property, as well as towns and villages have been destroyed. Clearly the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a major case of an acute humanitarian and security crisis.

Nepal welcomes the establishment of a new Transitional Administration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and believes that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) should help the new administration to bring peace and security to Kinshasa and elsewhere so that a democratic political process can be set in motion.

We also welcome the role that the Multinational Force, led by France, has played in containing violence in the Bunia area. The fact that the Bangladeshi contingent has begun to arrive in the Bunia area will go a long way towards promoting peace and stability in the Ituri region.

Nepal feels strong solidarity with the Congolese people and pledges its full cooperation to help them achieve peace and stability. Consistent with the pledge, Nepal has already deployed 19 military observers and headquarters staff and has made a further commitment of an army corps of engineers that is awaiting deployment by 1 September 2003 in Bunia.

We believe that the world community must redouble its efforts to restore lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The role of African countries in bolstering the process will be absolutely critical. African nations will also play an important role in building bridges among the parties in conflict. That will be essential in this respect.

At the same time, the Security Council must quickly take a fresh decision to increase MONUC's troop strength considerably and to adjust its mandate.

Only a credible MONUC presence can create confidence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is critical to stop hostilities in the Ituri region and elsewhere, to secure the Transitional Government on a firm footing in Kinshasa, and to implement an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The Council should also impose and enforce an arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To meet these challenges, the present Council-authorized strength of 8,700 troops is woefully insufficient. Nepal therefore calls on the Security Council to comply with the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the size of military deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also underline the need to address the humanitarian needs of the Congolese people as a matter of priority.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserve peace and prosperity. While they ought to work towards that goal with greater commitment on their part, the world community must come to their aid in a forthright manner. To promote peace and prosperity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is as much a moral imperative as it is in the enlightened self-interest of the global community. A peaceful and prosperous Democratic Republic of the Congo will be a boon to the well-being of Africa and of the entire world.

Nepal is willing to help the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through the United Nations, to the best of its capacity by contributing troops and other resources.

If asked by the United Nations, we are prepared to contribute one infantry battalion, which a Union assessment team that visited Kathmandu recently found fully capable of operating in the existing situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This brings us to the end of a meeting which, I think, has been tremendously interesting. I should like to thank Mr. Guéhenno, Mr. Solana and Mr. Ngongi.

The meeting rose at 2.10 p.m.